

Recherches en Education

Summaries of articles

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Language and teachers activities : interactions and constructions of knowledge

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Articulating knowledge construction, writing practices and speaking practices : the use of deliberative debates in French

Despite recommendations outlined in educational curricula over the last decade, the spoken debate form has struggled to establish itself as a standard practice in education. The use of spoken debates has suffered considerably from the contaminating effects of social practices that fail to ensure effective learning (such as media debates). Yet the debate form has many advantages (particularly in French). Provided they are linked to subject-specific objectives, are based on more constructive social practices, and are incorporated as a standard and highly regulated practice, spoken debates foster the development of a wide range of skill-sets in a context in which differences between pupils tend to be reduced. Based on an analysis of a prototypical deliberative debate conducted in seconde (first year of lycée, or French sixth form college), this paper shows how spoken debates create a safe collaborative space of exchange and encourage lycée pupils to adopt a reflexive attitude that supports learning (particularly in dialogic and interactional areas). While the high-level cognitive activity targeted by spoken debates cannot meet the demands of all learning objectives, the debate form consolidates subject-specific and cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills on a more egalitarian basis. More specifically, spoken debates foster the development of specialized literary reading skills and broader social and civic skills that subtend the process of individual identity construction in a group class context.

Naima HOCINE

Practices argumentative and interactional dynamics of the exchanges in class of language ; pragmatic analysis of the verbal interactions of Algerian learners in situation of debate

The skill in oral expression, which represents one in the most important aspects of the acquisition of a foreign language, acquires itself in situations of verbal interaction. The present article has for objective to describe the interactional dynamics which develops in communicative argumentative

activities in class of language. This study which concerns conceived debates as activities of learning and which took place in classes of FLE with Algerian learners of first secondary year consists in loosening and in analyzing the communications strategies used by the learners as well as those used by the teacher to bring them to speak. The composed questions, the speaking slots, the attitude of the teacher and the communications strategies in a class establish the essential point's object of our observation

Robert BOUCHARD

« Say what I say, don't say what I tell you to say » Dilemmas and paradoxes of teacher discourse and metadiscourse in the teaching and learning of foreign language oral expression.

This article deals with the teaching of oral expression, a central target in foreign language classes. In these classes speaking is at the same time a teaching tool and the aim of learning. But for the native teacher in particular, "embodied" oral expression largely escapes conscious control. There can be big differences between what he wants to teach and what he "displays" naturally in his own oral expression in class. It is these manifestations of authentic speech that this study attempts to observe, by comparing them to learner speech but also to epi/metalinguistic comments made by the teacher. To do this, we shall analyse different moments of a foreign language French class, in France, designed for foreign students and taught by a native teacher (Corpus LiYan 2007)

Serge QUILIO & Dominique FOREST

How to initiate and explore a marking-system during a mathematics lesson, working from pupils' activity. An example of combined language and non-language phenomena in the joint development of a an environment for study in primary schools.

We seek to describe verbal and non verbal interactions and how a teacher teaches mathematics in a learning situation where the production of mathematical concepts and a marking-system is developed from the pupils' activity with the teacher's guidance. We will describe the initial stages of teaching fractions to 10 year-old pupils from primary school, and more specifically the pupils' elaboration of a means to designate sizes much smaller than single units, such as the thickness of a sheet of paper (much less than a millimeter, requiring a slide rule for measurement), the mass of a nail (well below the level of sensitivity on the Roberval balance), or the capacity of a thimble etc. We show how a teacher together with the pupils, manages to develop common reference points, objectives and rules, in other words a shared learning-environment.

Christian DEPRET & Jean-Philippe MAITRE

Tacit and Implicit : defining didactical linguistic productions and their epistemic stakes

In common sign exchanges, many signs are used as if their meaning was a shared obviousness. The teacher cannot only assume the comprehension of what he says by the students (especially when it regards key notions).

When he uses a sign for the very first time, what it designates cannot be immediately understood by them. Comprehension shall occur indirectly, only on the basis of other signs which signification is supposedly known. Consequently, we see that one of the tasks of the teacher is to control the students' semiotic environment. In this paper, we develop a theoretical reflexion to enlighten the way teacher may deal with this responsibility. We will first acquaint with various acceptation of what is a sign, insisting on its relation with the knowledge of the person that uses it. In a second part, it will lead us to present the notions of tacit and implicit. Finally, in a third part, we will see to underline didactical phenomena and problems that these notions may help consider in the teacher speech

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The utility of institutionalising Places and Contracts of Philosophical Discussions practiced in French schools

Philosophical discussion has been practiced in French schools for the last 15 years. The simple illustration of this practice does not do justice to its utility. Our contribution seeks to open up this field to further scientific enquiry. We start by taking the recent controversy concerning the so-called chattering classroom as a subject of scientific research. Our stance with regard to this controversy is to defend an in-depth multidisciplinary analysis of philosophemes as specific thought movements elicited by these dialogs. We argue for the scientific validation of these under-researched topics to promote a dispassionate discussion of the utility of institutionalising these practices. Our aim is to overtake ideological obstacles and develop sound training of teachers in the active use of language-based activities in schools. A demonstration of this perididactic communication contract will probably influence the way we understand contracts operating in didactic exchange. Some impact on professional teaching methods is expected. Three scientific projects currently addressing this issue are designed to open a fairway for scientific work and help drive these novel dialogs between keen teachers and unwittingly pioneering pupils out of an institutional bunker.

Alain FIRODE

Thought and Language in Karl Popper and Lev Vygotski

During the last period of his career, Popper developed an evolutionary theory of mind, with conclusions that are often close to the theses of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotski. Both authors share the idea that language and the symbolic world in general play a decisive role in the formation of the human mind. They both emphasize the importance, in the process of mental development, of the interactions between the psyche and the linguistic and cultural environment. However, Popper's theory contains an idea which is not present in Vygotski's: namely the thesis according to which the symbolic universe ("World 3") possesses an autonomous logical reality, different from the physical, psychological and social reality. This thesis, which clashes with Vygotski's Marxist and materialistic point of view, introduces a deep difference between these two theories of mind. The result of this is that the Popperian analyses, unlike these of Vygotski, are not really compatible with the constructivist paradigm which currently prevails in the field of education.

Maira MAMÈDE

The construction of schooling frame as a context of literacy by Brazilians teachers

Scholar difficulties, especially among students of popular origin are largely due to unfamiliarity with literacy. But, beyond these difficulties that may be rooted in the social background of students, it seems necessary to ask how the frame of schooling is constructed as a context of literacy. Our objective was to identify pedagogic modes at work in Brazilian public schools, receiving only students from disadvantaged social groups, and observe how these modes are literacy contexts, particularly from the distinction between restricted and full literacy. Our analysis of classroom observations, both in primary and secondary education, shows that scholarisation frame can promote restricted or full literacy, depending on the implementation, by teachers and by students, of cognitive potentials related to literacy (orally or written). These first results have led to questions about the insertion in literacy of teachers themselves, especially since most of Brazilian teachers come from families with little or no schooling at all. In order to determine if teachers themselves are in full literacy, we analyzed writings produced in teacher education context. Analyses show that these productions are invested from writing modalities unlikely to support the actualization of cognitive potential related with literacy. Therefore, since some teachers are restrictedly literated, it seems unlikely that they can be able to include students in full literacy.