

Action Research Project

Project title: How do different types of student-centred activities function in the GFL classroom?
Active project participants : Minna Maijala, University of Turku, Finland ; Joanne Pagèze, Université de Bordeaux, France
Action Research Question: How do different types of student-centred activities function in the FL classroom?
Target group(s): University students learning German as a foreign language for general academic purposes at the Language Centre of the University of Turku University students learning English for Medicine at the Département Langues et Cultures of the University of Bordeaux
Action plan and timeframe: Autumn 2016
Action research tools used: Our reflections are based on the COLT (communication orientation of language teaching) or MOLT (motivation orientation of language teaching) framework, firstly introduced by (Spada & Fröhlich 1995), then modified by Nunan (1992) and Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008). Video analyses
<p>Main findings:</p> <p>It is important for teachers at all levels to reflect upon their practice and to question daily routings. Action research can be regarded as a method to achieve professional development. (cf. e.g. Wallace 1991; Burton 2009). In our project we focussed on the documentation and analysis of German classes and English classes at the Université de Bordeaux with a view to future development. The central aim was to discover how the student-centred focus learner-centred focus can be enhanced through different tasks in university language classes.</p> <p>We asked the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the choice of activity support the use of the target language? - How do the students use the target language? - How focussed are the students on the task? <p>We found out that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students were highly motivated and engaged in the activities. - Activities need to be scaffolded and planned carefully. - Trade-off between motivation/engagement and target language use needs to be carefully managed. - Students moved easily back to their 'better' languages (in the Finnish context English/Finnish in France: French) <p>In Finland, where the level was A2 the students, experienced some frustration in using the target language. Non-verbal strategies helped</p> <p>In France, where the language range was between B1 and C1 there was enthusiasm in developing the imagined situation accompanied by a loss of language focus. Translanguaging helped.</p>
Contact e-mail address: minmai(at)utu.fi