



From face-to-face to blended learning: A qualitative leap towards student autonomization

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Abstract. Within the framework of blended higher education, this article deals with a quantitative research. The aim is not to show the feasibility of the process but rather to validate the usefulness and impact of this mode of teaching on student autonomization. Our contribution aims to emphasize the particularities of blended teaching and the autonomous and flexible aspect of these blended environments.

The present research is in line with this problematic. It has a double objective which, on the one hand, deals with the effectiveness of a given hybrid course and, on the other hand, evaluates the effect of autonomous students' characteristics on their performance in this course.

We first examined the aspects related to the underlying pedagogical theory of this mode of teaching: a study of the literature brought out two findings that motivated this work. The first concerns the autonomous aspect specific to this approach, characterized mainly by its openness and its activities that promote autonomy, initiative-taking, and the emergence and transition of knowledge through a connected network of learners. The second is the need to provide assistance to students.

The methodological approach chosen for this essay is quantitative. We were able to count on the collaboration of students in order to validate the degree of autonomy during this mode of teaching.

The results obtained showed that the blended teaching proved to be an adequate and effective systemic process that allowed them to conceive and develop their autonomy and flexibility as well as their self-directed and autodidact character.

Keywords: blended learning, autonomy, students, autodirection

Résumé. S'inscrivant dans le cadre de l'enseignement supérieur hybride, cet article fait état d'une recherche quantitative. Il ne sera pas question de montrer la faisabilité de l'acte mais plutôt valider l'utilité et l'impact de ce mode d'enseignement sur l'autonomisation des étudiants. Notre contribution a pour

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To achieve successful communication between teacher and learner, we propose a specific and precise definition of the communicative and informational skills that teachers are expected to achieve during their training.

In addition to knowledge, which is no longer the subject of questioning, we are seeking to develop the future teacher's interpersonal skills and know-how, which are enriched through experience and the implementation of the action-oriented perspective.

Three research tools - an interview, a questionnaire and a study of current textbooks - enabled us to draw up a reference framework of skills that defines the entry and exit profile of future teachers of French as a foreign language.

In order to discipline our project, it has proved essential to define and differentiate between the key concepts that will enable the project to be mobilised and designed.

II. Communicative competence and the action approach:

Etymological conception

Contrary to what most people assume, competence is not synonymous with skill or attitude; it involves both skills and attitudes.

If we go back to the etymological origins of this concept, the first person to define it was Chomsky, by contrasting competence with performance.

According to him, competence determines a system of rules that is used to understand and produce an infinite number of grammatically correct and coherent sentences in a language shared by the same community.

It is important to realise that Chomsky's theory does not take into account the teaching/learning of a second or foreign language. If it did, then priority would be given to teaching and transmitting the rules of grammar, structural exercises and translation. Does this so-called grammatical or linguistic competence, as defined by Chomsky in 1965, enable the language to be adapted to different situations and audiences? Does it take into account the status and needs of the receiver?

The perspective of Hymes (1973) comes to banish Chomsky's conception by bringing together the two concepts of competence / performance by asserting that "there are rules of usage where the rules of grammar would be useless".

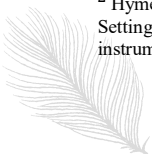
Hymes then incorporates the notion of social context, which involves not only understanding the message and interpreting it, but also creating exchange between individuals and communicating in different contexts.

According to Hymes, it is essential to take account of the aspects of language conditioned by the social context² through which it comes under the notion of patterns rather than fixed rules.

According to Puren : (PUREN) learning a language means learning to behave appropriately in communicative situations in which the learner will have some chance of finding himself using the codes of the target language.

According to the CEFR, the language user is considered to be a social actor who is expected to act in different areas of social life (personal, educational, professional, public) where he or she will be confronted with a number of contexts which in turn determine a certain number of communicative situations from which tasks will be carried out which may be linguistic or non-linguistic and will involve the application of knowledge, skills and interpersonal skills.

² Hymes' SPEAKING model: Hymes' famous model includes 16 components grouped into 8 main entries: Settings (where and when), Participants (who), Ends (why), Act (how), Key (how formal), Instrument (medium/instrument), Norm (what), Genre (which kind).



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The action approach is therefore the foundation of the CEFR's conception and perspective, which strives for the transition from communicators to doers.

Communicative competence is therefore the set of skills and attitudes that enable a social actor to communicate effectively in a language (mother tongue, second language, foreign language). And its various components are :



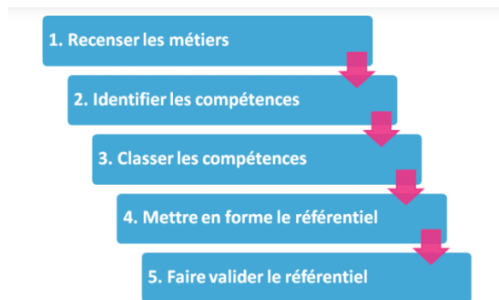
III. Skills repository:

The skills repository lists and catalogues the various skills to be achieved during a training course.

In the field of teaching/learning, the design of competency frameworks is essential to guarantee the educational success of learners, and to plan and structure the learning process.

It is an essential tool for managing a teaching unit or even a textbook. It enables you to anticipate training needs, plan a diagnostic assessment, evaluate skills and adjust or remedy their level.

How do you draw up a skills reference framework? ³



Under the shadow of these fundamental concepts, we are launching our research in two directions driven by two crucial questions:

³ <https://www.neevagroup.com/referentiel-de-competences/>



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- What communicative skills are offered in the curriculum of Moroccan primary school teachers?
- Are these skills really practised and managed in the field?

IV. Methodology :

The aim of our project is to identify and define the competences to be attained, as proposed in the education curriculum, and to compare them practically with what is practised in the field and what is taught to future primary school teachers.

The didactics of foreign languages is far from being an exact science. It is a field in constant reflection and evolution, and teachers must wear the mask of reflective practitioners seeking to make methodological and pragmatic principles harmonious in order to implement teaching that is modern, effective, realistic and adapted to the needs and expectations of learners and their learning habits.

And what we cannot deny all the more is the ever-increasing deterioration in the level of French as a foreign language among primary school learners, which is clearly shown by their results in ongoing tests or, worse still, in regional examinations.

Reform after reform, but without any concrete changes. Why is this?

In order to find answers to these questions, we have chosen to implement three research tools:

Questionnaire: addressed to primary school teachers and future teachers (students at the Ecole Normale Supérieure).

Interview: Proposed to primary school inspectors.

Study and analysis of primary school textbooks (state/private schools).

The aim of this research is to gain in-depth knowledge of the causes of the failure in the teaching/learning of French as a foreign language at primary level in Moroccan schools.

V. Presentation of the corpus

a- The questionnaire

Target audience: To support the objective of our research, the questionnaire was administered to primary cycle teachers of French as a foreign language working in a number of schools in Moroccan cities (Tétouan, Rabat, Meknès, Azrou, Casablanca, Tangiers).

The teachers to whom we gave the questionnaire were divided according to gender, classes in charge, years of experience and place of work.

We chose only teachers in the fourth, fifth and sixth years of primary school, which enabled us to make the following observations:

- 1- Decisive levels are most often awarded to teachers with the most experience.
- 2- The diversity of the number of years shows that there is necessarily a diversity of backgrounds, which requires different teaching techniques and methods.

Corpus 1: We drew up a questionnaire (see appendix) which includes a short introduction presenting the context of this survey, and a series of questions in different forms: closed and open. Each question has a specific objective, depending on the needs of our research. Our questions are mainly concerned with the installation of the action approach in the management of teaching practices in the teaching of FLE, the analysis of learners' needs and the adaptation of learning to the heterogeneity of the class group and to the various obstacles faced by the pupils.



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Questionnaires: Questionnaires are one of the most common strategies used in the social sciences and humanities. According to Allaire (1988), "the questionnaire offers a greater chance of obtaining responses and a better guarantee of the quality of the data collected. It offers an opportunity to motivate respondents, to ensure that the respondent is indeed the person indicated, and undoubtedly to note in the margin observations of interest for the interpretation of the results".⁴ . This opinion prompted us to resort to a real survey that would reveal the particularities of the theme being addressed. In this respect, the questionnaire we have planned for this study aims to discover the place of the action approach in Moroccan primary schools today. We will also try to identify the pedagogical practices of teachers in a class teaching French as a foreign language, as well as to unmask the causes of the deterioration in the level of FLE learners. We will also draw on the experience of teachers through their suggestions concerning the best strategies for setting up a platform that contributes to the improvement of FLE teaching/learning methods.

Corpus 2 :

Interviews: This is an interview in the form of questions/answers to provide information or clarification on a given topic or several topics.

In order to achieve an objective analysis and understanding of teachers' practices, we turned to inspectors, who play a necessary role in inspecting, supervising and evaluating teachers' practices, and who also contribute to their training throughout their careers.

The interview is our second research tool, which takes the form of a number of questions addressed to primary school inspectors and which are intended to give us a clearer idea of the practices, techniques, methods and teaching approaches that teachers use. The aim was also to find out, from their point of view, the professional and informational level of primary school teachers and to get an idea of their mastery of the language materials and tools they teach.

→ Conducting an interview



Our interview questions are simple, direct and, above all, respect polite rituals and are written in the present tense. The questions give the interviewees the freedom to express themselves and to put forward their own points of view, since we propose open-ended questions that lead to long answers and make the interview more interesting. These questions begin with : Who? Who? Where? When? When? How? how much? Why?

The title is captivating, with an introduction that explains and presents the theme and issues to the inspectors.

In what follows, we present the responses we required in order to analyse them in a later stage.

VI. Results :

Corpus 1 :

⁴ Allaire. A, 1988, " Questionnaire : mesure verbale du comportement " in **Recherches en psychologie**, n.16, p. 23



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a- Questionnaire for teachers

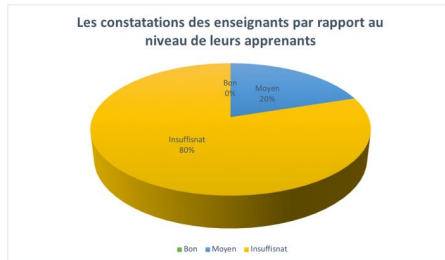
Question 1 : How would you describe the level of your students in French as a foreign language?

Good

Average

Insufficient

The aim of this question was to find out what teachers thought about the level of their learners. The responses were surprising, with 80 teachers opting for 'insufficient' and only 20 for 'average'. The answers to this question can be summarised as follows:



No one can deny that the level of learners at primary level has still not improved, and this data collection has enabled us to follow up, through the eyes of experts in the classroom, the level of Moroccan learners in FLE.

The questions that follow will help us to identify the causes of this stagnation.

Question 2: Do textbooks enable learners to acquire social and universal values?

Yes

No

The pedagogical guidelines for teaching/learning French as a foreign language at primary level emphasise that French, like any other subject, must enable learners to acquire and consolidate the values that are essential for the development of efficient and proud citizens.

From the point of view of teachers, practitioners in the field, do school textbooks enable the transmission of social and universal values?

90 teachers out of 100 opted for the "No" response, with only ten teachers out of 100 confirming by ticking "Yes".

The suggested textbooks do not meet the Ministry of Education's recommendations, which are clearly expressed in the curriculum.

So how can we instil these values in learners?

That's what we're going to try to find out through the questions that follow.

Question 3: Do you organise any extra-curricular activities?

Yes

No

We were curious to find out whether teachers integrate extracurricular activities into the FLE teaching/learning curriculum in order to pass on values that will enable children (future social actors) to interact and act effectively in their society.

50 teachers out of 100 answered "yes", 30 of these 50 are teachers in the private sector. In public schools, the organisation of extracurricular activities is compulsory, with the aim of commercialising the school. Does this planning really take into account the mobilisation of values within the FLE classroom or, in reality, is it not just about the learner?



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Question 4: In your opinion, the skills that need to be taken into account when managing a unit are :

- a- Grammatical skills
- b- Textual skills
- c- Sociolinguistic skills
- d- Pragmatic skills
- e- All

The aim of this question is to find out what skills the teacher is aiming for when piloting a unit.

The answers to this question can be summarised as follows:

Targeted skills	Number of times mentioned
Grammatical skills	12
Textual skills	89
Sociolinguistic skills	50
Pragmatic skills	00
All	00

We have chosen to translate this data into the following histogram:



Two skills are ranked in first place and judged by teachers as basic skills, essential for the acquisition of skills in the reception and production of both written and spoken language. These skills are "textual skills" which mark the character of the communicative skill which enables the language transmitted (written or oral) to be mobilised in production, interaction and mediation.

And "sociolinguistic skills", which represent the set of abilities and aptitudes to understand and produce a discourse or language that is socially appropriate to the contexts proposed.

Question 5 : Is the creation of communicative situations essential in the FLE classroom?

Yes

No

We have pointed out that it is necessary to ask this question in order to determine the role of communicative situations in the planning of teaching units.

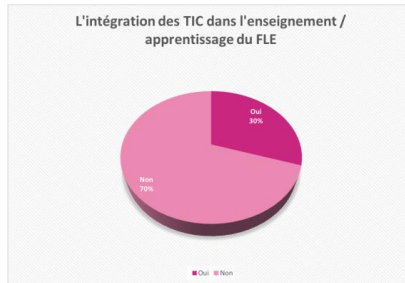
All the teachers agreed on the importance of creating communicative situations in the FLE classroom.

Question 6: Do you integrate ICT into teaching/learning?

Yes

No

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Most primary school teachers do not use the new information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning of FLE.

There are a number of reasons for this, which we will explain in a later stage of our project.

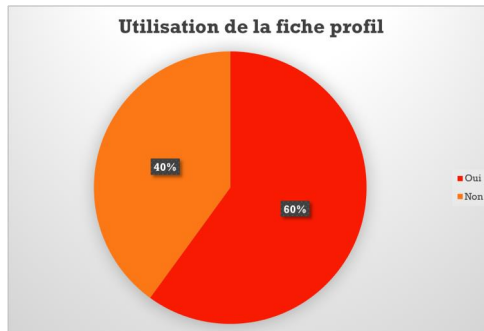
Question 7: Do you use a profile sheet to identify learners' needs?

Yes

No

The profile sheet is one of the key tools that enable the teacher to identify the level and needs of each learner, and then develop objectives tailored to the profiles to be achieved.

The answers to this question are as follows:



60% of teachers use the profile sheet to list the heterogeneous levels of their learners.

Question 8: What do you target most during a listening comprehension session?

a- Listening to and understanding texts

b- Listening to/understanding instructions (instructions, advice, etc.)

c- Active listening using media

Two elements take pride of place in this eighth question: listening and reading comprehension. One of the problems faced by learners, even at tertiary level, is the fact that they do not understand oral discourse. Much more importance was given to written production, since any other activity was considered a transition to harvesting the fruits of written production. In other words, language and grammar activities, and oral reception and production activities were only a preparatory phase for producing syntactically correct written work, but were never an end in themselves.

Today, the main objective is communication, moving on from the passive learner who receives to the active, communicating learner who interacts in his environment.

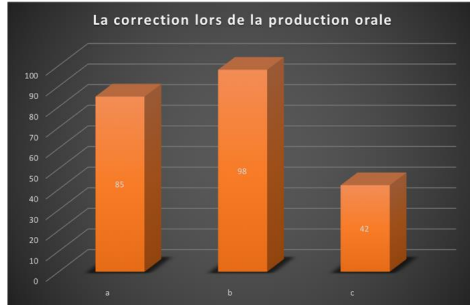
The second essential element is listening to and understanding instructions.



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Question 9: During the oral production, you correct :

- a- Linguistic mistakes: interrupting the learner's speech
- b- Coherence of discourse
- c- You don't correct mistakes because the aim is to encourage the learner to communicate



According to the action approach, and of course the primary school teaching/learning curriculum which also adopts it as a teaching approach, production is an activity in which the learner is expected to energise and mobilise everything he or she has learnt during a unit or even a module.

The responses highlight two main choices:

- ➔ Correction of linguistic errors while cutting off speech.
- ➔ Correcting the coherence of speech.

The question we asked ourselves when collecting this data was: "Is our objective in an oral production session mainly to correct mistakes or rather to encourage learners to express themselves?"

Question 10: What would you suggest to improve the level of Moroccan learners of French as a foreign language?

This final question is an opportunity for teachers to express themselves and suggest solutions that could help our students' development and progress. But it will also give us an idea or diagnosis of our teachers' strategies.

Some of the answers are:

- Implement an active and functional teaching approach.
- The use of ICT.
- Improve the primary school curriculum by focusing on the learner and on the class group as a social framework for interaction and mediation.
- Offer communicative situations and texts adapted to the level of the learners.
- Avoid translation when explaining.
- Give more reading and thinking exercises to complete outside the classroom.
- Oralising reading comprehension sessions to encourage both written and oral comprehension and production.
- Boosting teaching practices through educational games.
- Form heterogeneous groups to ensure information sharing and a spirit of mutual support.
- Set up reading and production workshops.

Questionnaire for future teachers (ENS students / LE primary)

This questionnaire was sent to around forty LE primary students (future teachers);

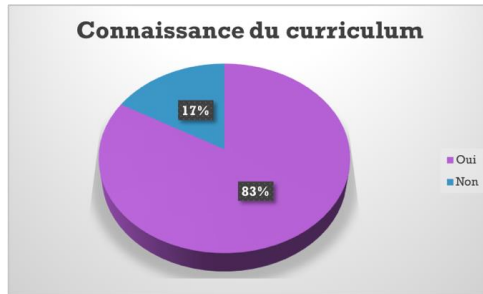
Question 1: Do you have any ideas about what the 2021 /2024 primary curriculum proposes?

Yes No



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In our opinion, approaching the questionnaire in this way is a good way of diagnosing the level of our future teachers. Reading and knowing the curriculum is an essential step in being able to take charge of a level or even a cycle.



Primary LE learners are already familiar with the teaching guidelines for the primary cycle. Only 17% of students are unaware of this.

Question 2: In what context is the language used?

- a- Fictitious
- b- Authentic
- c- Fantastic
- d- Unlikely
- e- All these contexts



The main aim of this question is to see whether future teachers are capable of offering support materials in a variety of contexts, or whether they will remain attached to textbooks.

The new generation of future teachers is rapidly learning the principles of the action approach.

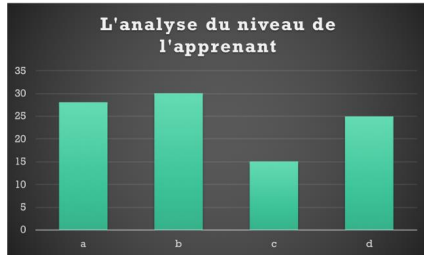
Question 3: What can you do to analyse the level of your learners?

- a- Prepare a profile sheet
- b- Planning a diagnostic assessment
- c- Supporting learners as they learn
- d- All these parameters at once

The aim of this question is to see if future teachers know the path to follow in order to diagnose and support the learner's level.

The following histogram shows the data required:

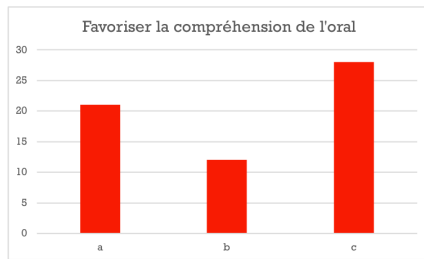
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The parameters most frequently chosen are those for preparing the profile sheet and planning the diagnostic assessment.

Question 4: How can we encourage learners to understand spoken language?

- a- Listening to texts or songs
- b- Encouraging listening to/understanding instructions
- c- Media coverage of content



Future teachers know that it's time to move on to reception sequences, which means that we need to look for new tools to motivate learners: short videos, songs, media in the classroom... all these factors help to energise teaching practices in the FLE classroom and also create motivation.

The histogram above shows the responses of primary LE students, almost all of whom opted for "mediating content", with the second most popular choice being "listening to texts or songs".

Question 5: What can you suggest to help learners improve their level of FLE?

We proposed this last question to allow future teachers to express their suggestions and put forward their proposals.

The answers we have selected are :

- 1- Insist on the right to speak.
- 2- Encourage educational communication E / A.
- 3- Suggest educational games to motivate learners.
- 4- Create and propose new communication situations that are part of the learner's experience.
- 5- Simplify the language and grammar lessons and practise them using the basic materials in each unit.
- 6- Create a warm and friendly environment.
- 7- Consider the learner as a social actor with the right to act and interact.
- 8- Inculcate social values that will enable them to integrate into their society.

Corpus 2 :

Interview with the inspectors



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Question 1: During your visit, what is the first thing you notice in an FLE class?

→ The responses we received were varied and can be broken down as follows:

The first thing we notice is the state of the classroom, the organisation of the tables, the posture of the teacher and that of the learner too.

The first thing that catches our eye is the organisation of the tables and how the learners are seated, the way they greet us reflects many criteria that are rarely detected; motivated, terrified, asleep ...

Question 2: Do teachers apply the principles of the action approach?

The responses to this question were disappointing, but in comparison with the responses to the questionnaire sent to teachers, the logic is clear.

The action-based approach places the learner at the centre of learning, where they are expected to carry out concrete tasks. But this method is not always applied by the majority of teachers.

Unfortunately, teachers have still not managed to change their teaching methods and strategies. Sometimes they simply present a lecture because of time pressure or lack of creativity.

Question 3: Do the teachers always have the teaching file when you ask for it?

Rarely do we ask for the teaching sheet; what interests us during our visit is to see what the atmosphere is like in the classroom; how the teacher acts and how his learners interact. It's the energy created by the teacher that interests us. If the learner is able to express him/herself even if he/she makes grammatical errors, we have achieved our objective.

The teaching sheets are not always presented.

Question 4: Do teachers prepare a learner profile sheet?

In the past, the profile sheet was not required because it was not formal. Today, however, the profile sheet is one of the documents that teachers must have in their folder.

Question 5: Do teachers innovate and propose new communication situations or follow the textbook to the letter?

Due to lack of time, teachers have to make do with the communication situations proposed in the textbook and are obliged to reduce them to make them easier to learn.

We try to fight for innovation and creation, but unfortunately, teachers don't often come up with new communication situations, they're too busy finishing the textbook that they don't manage to create and innovate.

Question 6: In FLE classes, are learners much more receivers or communicators?

In FLE classes, learners are often on the receiving end, and the French language is always difficult for them to learn; it is always foreign.

Our aim is to move from a passive learner to an active learner, so even though in our classes most learners don't manage to communicate or interact, we always encourage teachers to push learners to speak by motivating them.

Question 7: Does teaching FLE enable learners to develop social and universal values?

Teaching FLE helps to develop universal social values such as fraternity, tolerance, solidarity, voluntary work, etc.

Textbooks propose social and universal values, but the role of the teacher is to know how to make them dynamic in order to inculcate them in learners.

Question 8: In your opinion, does the teacher always have enough time to plan the course, develop the scenario and prepare learner profile and progress sheets?

Of course, preparatory work outside the classroom is essential and necessary, but from a personal point of view, teachers don't always find the time to plan, prepare worksheets, correct written work, etc., especially in an overcoming class.

Question 9: What is the greatest challenge a teacher can face?

A teacher's biggest challenges are: getting the class involved, motivating the learners and correcting the written work every day.



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In our opinion, the greatest challenge for an FLE teacher is to create motivation in a disinterested learner and to innovate in order to popularise the content so that it is easier for them.

Question 10: Do you regularly plan training courses for teachers?

In general, training courses are organised whenever there is something new to communicate in the field of education or whenever there is a change of programme.

We try to plan and organise training sessions and meetings on a regular basis to support and coach the teacher.

Question 11: Generally on what theme?

Generally on new programmes or when a new note appears on the ministerial curriculum.

It depends on the difficulties the teachers are facing, which we took the time to note and define during our visits.

Question 12: In your opinion, what is still blocking the educational success of EFL learners?

What blocks learners' educational success is first and foremost the disruptive environment, whether family or social. There is also a lack of motivation and interest, frequent changes of school, especially in rural areas, and excessive use of mobile phones.

Question 13: What needs to be done to ensure the success of EFL learners?

To ensure that learners succeed, they need to be supported and accompanied, and those who are having difficulties need to be mentored by those who are more advanced.

Pedagogical communication is the key to learner success. Gaining the learner's trust allows them to express themselves freely without fear of being punished. Creating that sacred contact that enables knowledge to be passed on simply and fluidly by deploying the right methods.

VII. Analysis:

The results we have reported confirm all our initial hypotheses;

The teaching/learning of FLE is not based simply and solely on knowledge of the rules of grammar, spelling or even conjugation, but is an act that must have communication as its goal. It involves the development of two major skills;



The teacher is then supposed to encourage the learner to assimilate and mobilise all these skills at the same time in different communicative situations that are part of his or her daily life. We need to move away from the old conception of this act and start thinking of the foreign language learner as a social actor who is expected to act from one day to the next in the major areas of social life (personal, educational, professional, etc.). In each of these areas or sectors, they will be confronted with different contexts which will determine a certain number of situations (authentic, fictitious, fantastic, improbable, etc.). To get people to learn and to get them involved in learning, we need to create tasks for them to accomplish, since all social actors carry out actions in a given situation with a view to achieving a given result. All these actions, motivated by a need arising from a given situation, constitute a task.



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According to the principles of the action approach, the learner is a social actor in a learning situation who constructs his knowledge and skills according to his own needs.

Before planning various communication situations, it is important to bear in mind :

Choice of content.

The criteria on which their presentation is based.

The choice of learning materials and activities corresponding to each situation, taking into account the differentiation of profiles; in other words, applying "differentiated pedagogy" to the letter in the EFL classroom.

The fundamental aim of school is to master a foreign language. The learner is therefore expected to understand and produce, both orally and in writing, different types of text or discourse in a variety of situations. This learner, who is in the process of discovering this so-called "foreign" language, is faced with writing and discourse difficulties, and this is precisely where the crucial role of the teacher comes in, who is no longer the holder or disseminator of all knowledge, but has become an adviser and organiser of learning. These new roles are much more demanding, since they require a high level of training and a great deal of preparation time to find interesting and motivating tasks for learners to complete.

The origin of these new roles lies in the most important development: "moving from language-centred teaching to learner-centred teaching".

Nowadays, during oral production sessions, we no longer try to correct grammar or conjugation mistakes by cutting the learner off, but the primary objective of this type of production session must certainly be to improve self-confidence and mobilise the knowledge acquired.

The idea that a foreign language is just an academic language that will only be useful at school must be banished. This approach consists of encouraging the learner to plan learning by placing them in appropriate situations to which they will respond 'spontaneously' by adapting.

The aim is to make it easier for children to acquire skills that will support them in their education and in their daily lives, while focusing on everything that is fundamental to ensuring that knowledge is passed on as effectively as possible.

VIII. Conclusion:

In order to teach using the action-oriented approach, the learner's role in the classroom, environment and society must first be highlighted. The mobilisation and dynamism of all teaching practices will enable the learner to be integrated into his or her learning and, consequently, to be motivated and develop his or her level.

Relationships are very important and should never be neglected. The teacher/learner relationship is a relationship with all that this implies in terms of joy and difficulty, a relationship that is crucial to the educational success of learners.

Let's take as an example the story told by the writer Azzouz Begag in an extract from his book "Le Gone Chaâba", an extract that reveals and exposes the impact and effect of a teacher on a child. A word, a simple word that is insignificant for an adult can be motivating or upsetting for a child.

In an FLE class, we are constantly faced with challenges. Demotivation, lack of interest and the difficulties faced by both the learner and the teacher are just some of the barriers to progress. It is for these and other reasons that we need to see the teaching/learning of FLE in a different light, while renewing our ways of doing things.

IX. Bibliography

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