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English Teaching in French Vocational Secondary Education: the Influence of a Participatory Action Research on Changes of Teachers' Practices

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Research question

How a participatory action research influences changes of teachers' practices in a specific track (the Certificate of vocational ability) characterised by pupils with the lowest school achievements and the lowest school perseverance of the French secondary education?

Vocational High school

Figure 1 : French Education System

Age		French institution – UNESCO Classification - Approximate correspondence with US institutions		
		Université/Instituts Universitaires de Technologie/ Section de techniciens supérieurs – (ISCED 4 to 8*) - University/ University Institutes of Technology/ High-level Technician Section		
18				
17		Lycée général et technologique - Upper Secondary School (ISCED 3*) - General and Technological High school	Lycée professionnel – Upper Secondary School (ISCED 3*) - Vocational / Professional High School	Centre de formation d'apprentis - Apprenticeship Training Centres
16	Compulsory education			
15				
14				
13		Collège –Lower Secondary Education (ISCED 2*) - Middle School		
12				
11				
10				
9				
8		Ecole élémentaire - Primary Education (ISCED 1*) – Elementary School		
7				
6				
5				
4	Ecole maternelle - Early Childhood Education (ISCED 0*) – Pre-school/ Kindergarten			
3				

*Created by UNESCO in 2011, the term ISCED stands for International Standard Classification of Education and was adopted by OECD. It is divided into levels 0-8 (OECD, 2019). Figure 1 shows ISCED levels 0-6.

Design-Based Research (DBR) / collaborative research

DBR implications

DBR deals with doing research **with** rather than **on** teachers: bringing practitioners and researchers together in an investigative process around the same subject (Morrissette, 2015)

What is DBR

In design-based research, practitioners and researchers work together to produce meaningful change in contexts of practice (e.g., classrooms, after-school programs, teacher on-line communities).” (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003)

DBR results

“Interventions have resulted in improved outcomes or student attitudes, and they offer rich clues as to the match between the successful testing of the intervention and the context of practice.” (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012)

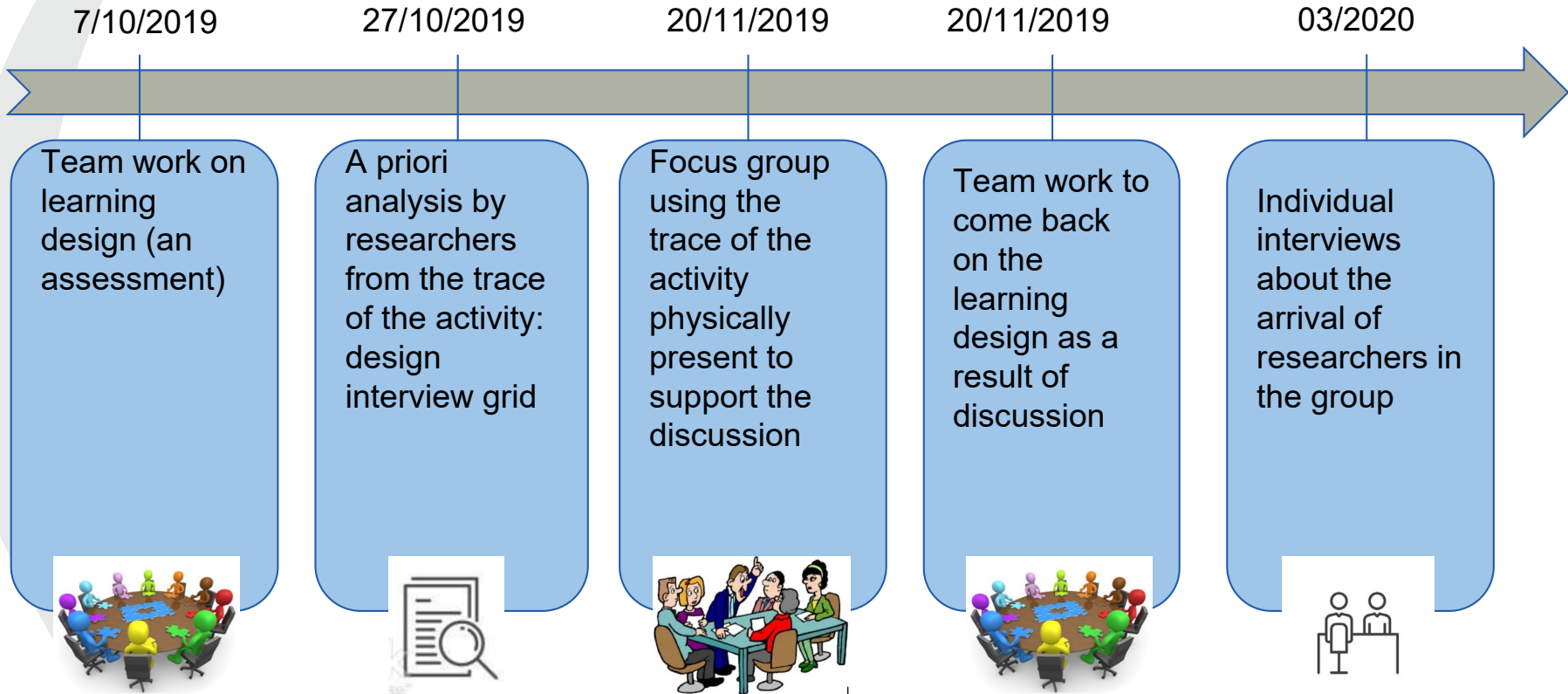
DBR features

DBR is based on five fundamental characteristics:
(a) pragmatism;
(b) rootedness;
(c) interaction, iteration and flexibility;
(d) integration; and
(e) contextualisation (Sanchez & Réjane Monod-Ansaldi, 2015)

DBR example

For instance, DBR, as a methodology, allows to take a look on in whether the teachers displayed any habits that contributed to the development of their personal Pedagogical Content Knowledge. (Hultén & Björkholm, 2016)

Methodology



Focus groups

Benefits

- **A space for sharing experiences**
 - I have a question: how do you make the cultural passport?
 - So we [...] we created it as a team...
[...]
 - Unlike [...]’s team, we...
 - I can evaluate them orally but I can’t do written assessments.
 - I experienced this situation.
- **Reflective hindsight**

“We could have done...”

“We may not have taken into account the fact that [...] some were going to change tracks at the end of this CAP”
- **Practice change**

“I wasn’t able to do this before but now I can”

Blockings

- **Fears due to teachers’ representations about CAP students (learning difficulties, heterogeneity...)**

“Some students can’t write”

“The girl from Mayotte doesn’t have any cell phone[...]”

“At home they sleep, they watch [...] and that’s all”

“Some say: ‘I don’t like anything, we don’t have any passions, I do nothing with my parents’ ”
- **Difficulties in understanding the instruction and the concept of diagnostic evaluation**

“It seems to me that it was [...]. We were asked to create a tool [...]”

“Uh yes it’s an evaluation that would be done [...] Well, that’s how we considered it.”

Individual interview

Question: "How did you perceive the arrival of researchers in your group?"

Boundary Objects

« There is still a hierarchical link with the inspector that comes back quite spontaneously and so in this case by interposing you, things were seen differently in my opinion, it was facilitating. »

Knowledge

« But it's true that very little work has been done on the vocational high school and it's a lot of work on the students and very little on the teachers and their way of teaching, so I hope that you'll be able to contribute on this subject »

Reflexive tools

« For the interviews, I think that talking to you makes us realize things, so it's good because it's as if, it's as if we were doing our self-assessment, instead of doing it alone, and here you are to guide us on the questions »

Outside view

« I found it interesting, an exchange with an outside view because when we are between teachers, we often find ourselves sharing the same ideas »

Idea of what is research

« But now you have the time to spend a lot of time on it. I actually love the work of researchers because it allows them to do a really specific work »

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the teachers' discourse in the interviews, we can discuss that:

Researchers: skills and tools

This process is partly due to **the researcher's interviewing skills**: the fact to point out an element of the conversation to deepen a subject; to restate an extract; to question the statements; and so on.

A **confidence relationship** was built with the teachers during their interviews

Collaborative research: a space of freedom

We observe a real **change in teachers' attitudes** in terms of interactions, type of speech, compared to those conducted with the inspector.

They can **speak more freely** because they allow themselves to discuss

Collaborative research: a co-construction space about how to work

The teachers express their perceptions, exchange points of disagreement and thus **develop a general reflection about how to work**



Thank you for listening

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