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**Converging values, objectives and practice:
A case study in an English class for Master students in Social and Solidarity Economy**

**FAIRE CONVERGER LES VALEURS, LES OBJECTIFS ET LES PRATIQUES
D'APPRENTISSAGE ET D'ENSEIGNEMENT
LE COURS D'ANGLAIS EN MASTER ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE ET SOLIDAIRE¹**

Brett Johnson

Introduction en français

Dans l'apprentissage comme dans l'enseignement, le partenariat est plus efficace et pertinent lorsque les valeurs fondamentales convergent avec les objectifs et les pratiques. Les apprenants et/ou les étudiants deviennent capables de réaliser des actions individuelles et collectives qui créent du sens, ainsi que du bien-être individuel et collectif à la fois.

D'une certaine manière, une communication authentique est aussi un processus de partenariat, renvoyant la responsabilité de chacun envers les autres. Comment créer un dispositif inclusif, dans lequel chacun – se sentant respecté et engagé dans un projet cohérent ? Comment les valeurs de l'économie sociale et solidaire peuvent-ils améliorer l'éducation et la formation ? Quel est l'impact de la coopération et de la collaboration sur l'apprentissage collectif et individuel ? Le partage des connaissances et des savoir-faire peuvent-ils améliorer le bien-être commun d'un groupe et de ses membres ? Au-delà du simple altruisme, la coopération en classe est-elle perçue comme une « investissement » ou comme une perte de temps ? Est-elle émancipatrice ou coercitive ? Le cours d'anglais du Master 2 Économie Sociale & Solidaire de l'Université de Haute Alsace fournit une occasion idéale pour explorer ces questions.

**Converging Values, Objectives and Practice in Learning and Teaching.
A Case Study in Master 2 SSE English Class**

The learning and teaching partnership is more effective and meaningful when core values, purpose and practice converge. They then become agents for self- and collective realization; they make sense and empower both individual and collective well-being, and serve as benchmarks for analysis and corrective action. After all, effective communication is a partnership process, so what is one's responsibility towards others? How can the values of social and solidarity economy benefit education? What is the impact of cooperation and collaboration on group and individual learning? Can sharing knowledge and savoir-faire improve the common well-being of a group and of its individuals? Beyond simple altruism, do students perceive cooperation in class as being worthwhile or just a waste of time? Is it liberating or coercive? The English class of Master 2 *Économie Sociale & Solidaire* (M2 ESS in French: hereafter M2 Social and Solidarity Economy – M2 SSE) program in the University of Haute Alsace is the ideal opportunity to explore these questions.

¹ STOESSEL-RITZ, JOSIANE ET BLANC, MAURICE (DIR.) (2020) « *Comment former à l'économie sociale et solidaire* » : chapitre en français : JOHNSON, Brett, « *Faire converger les valeurs, les objectifs et les pratiques d'apprentissage dans l'enseignement. Le cours d'anglais en master Économie sociale et solidaire* » (p. 259-274), Presses universitaires de Rennes, coll. « Économie, gestion et société », ISBN : 9782753579163. <http://www.pur-editions.fr/detail.php?idOuv=5003>

My work as a foreign-language teacher of English since 1998 in the Language Resource Centers (CRL) of the University of Strasbourg has allowed me to put into practice and test *learner-centered* teaching of English for non-specialists (LanSAD). With such an innovative approach, I was invited in 2008 by Josiane Stoessel, director of the Master program in Social and Solidarity Economy, to teach the English class in her Master 2 SSE in the University of Haute Alsace.

Learner-centered pedagogies focus on developing autonomy, on acquiring skills and competencies, and evaluating performance. In practice, the “*approche actionnelle*” (Rosen, 2010), “learning by doing” in foreign languages with “real-life” tasks, intends to put the learner in the center of the learning process, and set out to align authentic “real-life” objectives, methods and outcomes, with or without the help of a teacher. The class is an authentic micro-society, where interaction among learners depends on social codes acquired or learned. Class pedagogy structures learning around projects corresponding to real-life situations, where participants coordinate and collaborate in the target language, in this case English. Participants develop learner-directed strategies to cope with challenges, developing the skills and competencies to participate actively in class. They evaluate their progress by assessing their success at accomplishing tasks and reflexive learning. Developing meta-cognition of one’s own learning strategies helps to make learning more effective; it is a strategy that enables learners to teach themselves and each other.

In practice, however, it is not so simple. The focus here is on action and adaption to “real-life”, where learner-centered methods may examine the impact and burden of transfer of the responsibility of the learning process to the individual, but never mention values. These learner-centered methods mention cooperation², but often take it for granted, and set off to legitimize the evaluation of individual learner performance. They seem tailor-made to promote individual adaptability and “excellence” in preparation for the labor market, but ignore their social ecosystem³. In ranking systems, beyond personal gain, performance and utility, what values are being promoted? Student ranking and cooperation between students are antagonistic forces.

Though the process of self-directed learning appears to be liberating, a process of self-determination, it can also be alienating. If left without formative guidance, participants sometimes feel that they have been left to their own devices, alone, lacking the skills, tools and methodology to move forward (Kirschner *et al.*, 2006) in a world difficult to apprehend, leaving them alienated and reduced to trying to survive. The self-centered learner alone is just another alienated one-dimensional man, as described by Marcuse (1964), seeking utilitarian relationships. There are so many people alone together in the class.

Values in Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

Can Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) core values alleviate this sense of individual alienation, reinforce social bonds and promote an ecosystem of well-being as a public good (Desroche, 1991; Parodi, 2007)? Can these values engender practices that compensate for the focus on individuation in language learning and develop a sense of

² Examples of cooperation in language learning are the “concept of social presence where the development of learner autonomy is a socially mediated process of shared responsibility” (Capelli & Rivens, 2017, p.6) and Ghorati’s collaborative critical thinking (CCT) (Ghorati, 2015, p.86-103).

³ « Le danger de thématiser l’autoformation comme le produit du libéralisme économique et culturel, qui pousse l’individu vers la compétition globale ou de l’assimiler à une stratégie d’étude efficace est particulièrement manifeste. [...] En s’appuyant sur les besoins d’un marché du travail en crise, on assimile l’autoformation à une technique d’entreprise pour améliorer les niveaux d’efficacité et contrôler les coûts de l’innovation ; secondement on banalise l’autoformation comme une ruse de mémorisation d’information pour mettre à jour l’apprentissage des langues étrangères, des dispositifs économiques ou informatiques » (Biasin, 2011, p.23).

citizenry? If students and teachers have chosen to work together to promote Social and Solidarity Economy, what values drive them to do so? M2 SSE students have described the values as collaboration, direct democracy, solidarity, acceptance, respect, listening to others, tolerance, difference, well-being, and inclusion – that the greatest number of students succeed⁴.

This step of defining values is crucial to give purpose to collaboration, define our goals, experiment and prototype, and offer a basis for critical corrective analysis. They serve to challenge ingrained familiar habits that we so easily revert to, especially when in danger. As language learning is a process mediated by the affect, one would expect that such a cooperative class would incite students to care for each other's well-being, open doors to develop effective teamwork and conflict resolution, progress in learning languages, and implicate students in collaborative work and citizenry. Can these values drive and guide the collaboration and learning process in the program, and more specifically, in their English class? As a prototype, the M2 SSE English class can test our vision of utopia, try to put it into practice, become grounded, plant the seeds to create the critical mass for the phase changes necessary to improve the prototype, and then make it possible to scale up. As such, the Masters in Social and Solidarity Economy in the University of Haute Alsace is the right place to test this convergence.

English as an obstacle

In learning English as a foreign language, the first obstacle is English itself. Since the levels of students are extremely heterogeneous in the English class in M2 SSE, from A2 to C2 (Rosen, 2010), English distorts the relations within a group. “*All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others*” (Orwell, 1945, p.123). The traditional French academic response would be to separate students by level and create study tracks for them to follow to succeed to the next level. Can a heterogeneous class be worthwhile for all levels of English skills, or simply an inefficient waste of time for the advanced, and an impossibly intimidating task that subordinates the weak? The challenge is to respect an individual's sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Ideally, strong speakers of English can coach those who need help, but if reciprocity is necessary, would a Local Exchange Trading System⁵ work in class? The objective is for the maximum number to participate and become resources for each other, to exchange points of view. Should this relationship be formalized or informal? How can students feel safe, maintain their self-esteem, in this changing paradigm?

At best, the students' ability to participate is dependent on their confidence and capacity to express themselves in English. At worst, English is a vector of cultural domination and exclusion. Disposition to learn is crucial. Some are convinced that «*je suis nul en anglais*»⁶, a psychological handicap that is difficult to overcome. So many students, as a defensive strategy, proclaim they have no need to learn English, their French worldview is sufficient, and others perceive English as a vector of Anglo-Saxon capitalist global domination. Those intimidated of being judged in English relive engrams of being reprimanded as pupils. Only if they are convinced that the classroom is not a dangerous place,

⁴ Education can be a “public good” that is not exclusive, where learning is an unlimited process that cannot be exhausted but rather is enriched by stimulating exchange, or it can be an exclusive ranking system of “excellence,” an artificially-designed scarcity, a gate-keeping normative selection process designed to select the lucky few who benefit from education and exclude the others.

⁵ (LETS in English – *Système d'échange local*, *SEL* in French).

⁶ Translation: “*I am bad in English*” or “*I am worthless in English*” (I know because my teacher told me so)

that they are allowed to make mistakes, and can use mistakes as opportunities to learn, can they make progress⁷ (Little, 2000).

Changing worldviews

By studying examples of SSE outside of France, students can discover other worldviews. Studying SSE in the Anglo-Saxon world allows students to apprehend the role of associations and grassroots movements that respond to community and social needs where governments provide less social support. Cultural differences include the importance of personal initiative, citizenry and local governance that encourage associations to respond to local interests⁸. American society is fascinated by novelty, and is structured by the primacy of private property over the commons, the attitude towards money as an expression of social status, the challenges to get media coverage for social interests in a capitalist country, and an inherent cultural pressure for compromise that excludes the margins. Some examples of local initiatives in the Anglo-Saxon world include intergenerational housing, food co-ops, innovative structures for the inclusion of the disabled, zero-emissions housing, Incredible Edibles, community-supported agriculture (CSA), Forever Farms, and *Local Exchange Trading System*. Studying these projects and other foreign projects forces students to look beyond the French-speaking world.

On a linguistic basis, English also reveals other structures of perceiving the world, valorizing experience with the present perfect, preferring action verbs to noun structure nominalizations frequent in French, and avoiding the passive verb structure of the French « *on* », the anonymous “one”, by specifying the actor as the subject doing something in sentences. Can such diversity in background and English skills be an opportunity for mutual development by sharing and helping each other out? This situation tests the realities and conflicts of solidarity in the classroom.

Posture of the teacher and learner

I have had to reconsider the posture and role of the teacher in such a class. This change of paradigm requires a change in posture of both teachers and students; the teacher is no longer at the center stage, and the students need explicit goals to commit to the process⁹. First, the values: I consider myself to be above all an enabler, trying to offer opportunity and a supportive, creative, curiosity enhancing learning environment for students to explore the unknown, and share their discoveries. They can dare to venture out of their comfort zones and take risks, students need to know that they have a “safe haven”, the class, to which they can return to without being judged; where they can give and take constructive feedback; and where they can begin to learn from their mistakes. Mistakes are an opportunity to learn; otherwise, we just keep repeating them. Some students have an aversion to risk, and prefer to stay within the familiar binary dependency of a teacher transmitting knowledge to the student consumer, rather than take responsibility for learning and investing in developing content

⁷ When language learners “feel inferior to native speakers of the language in question, and have restricted access to the society in which they are living, their language learning is unlikely to progress very far” (Little, 2000, p.4).

⁸ « Partout où, à la tête d’une entreprise nouvelle, vous voyez en France le gouvernement et en Angleterre un grand seigneur, comptez que vous apercevrez aux États-Unis une association » (De Toqueville, 1848, p.214). « Lorsqu’on les laisse s’associer librement en toutes choses, [les Américains] finissent par voir, dans l’association, le moyen universel, et pour ainsi dire unique, dont les hommes peuvent se servir pour atteindre les diverses fins qu’ils se proposent » (*ibidem*, p. 235).

⁹ “The teacher must work hard to persuade the learners that learning is not a matter of the expert pouring information into the non-expert: it is always a matter of partnership, negotiation, trial and error” (Little, 2000, p.19).

through research before the class to exchange in class, the “flipped classroom.” They need to be assured that as a teacher I do not expect perfection, but rather that students work towards mastery (Khan, 2015). This posture needs to be cultivated in class and cannot be taken for granted.

I also wish to valorize the incredibly diverse resources and experience of the student population, to valorize their personal experiences through their projects and build up a sense of confidence within the group. Knowledge and experience are human resources that have greater potential if they are shared and not hoarded for oneself. This also promotes unforeseen possibilities for discovery and innovation within the group, confronting one’s point of view with others, increasing the potential for group common intelligence¹⁰.

The goal is to establish the spirit of the gift economy¹¹ of knowledge, reinforce social cohesion, build up a robust sense of well-being and trust within the group, and develop a mutual help support network. These bonds are a form of engagement, resilience to help identify and overcome obstacles or resolve conflicts. The concept of “social mixity¹²” of the diversity of backgrounds is tested. We share intention, to learn from and help each other, what each of us can do, learning by doing at a local level.

This sharing requires developing communication skills and understanding underlying implicit questions of culture and values, which need to be discussed not only for content, but also to develop an innovative prototype for a more benevolent classroom, to deepen our understanding of what it means to be human, our capacity to give and receive, the meaning and purpose of our existence. “Perhaps by studying the gift economy we can work towards both scholarship and societies that are more sustainable, reciprocal, and just” (*ibidem*)

Solidarity vs. institution in the classroom

Creating a structure to promote this empowerment is one of the challenges of teaching and learning. We need some structure to help make sense of the complexity of the world around us, and accept dissonance that challenges institutional enclosure within this structure. Who is responsible for evaluation and for what purpose – learning or selection?

One approach to maintaining an open classroom is to welcome co-construction of content, process and values in the classroom. This process takes time and requires patience, the initial challenge for the participants who must weigh the cost of personal investment for effective personal gain. To welcome unforeseen potential and encourage participation, the underlying values need to be explicit, in this case SSE, to determine the method and objectives in the class, and evaluate progress made both towards personal and professional objectives are compatible with core SSE values, and offer feedback to realign and adjust the process with these values.

To promote the identification of values, before the first class, participants try to define what SSE values are for them, and give examples of what is not SSE. These values are first discussed in small groups, then brought together to be synthesized as a mindmap on the whiteboard. Some of these values included cooperation, benevolence, support, well-being,

¹⁰ “Intelligence should be viewed as a physical process that tries to maximize future freedom of action and avoid constraints in its own future” (Wissner-Gross, 2014, p.1).

¹¹ “The gift economy as conceived by Mauss nearly a century ago, based on empirical anthropological studies of actual human societies, contemporary and ancient, involves moral and social obligations that creates a bond between groups and individuals without necessarily being *obligatory* obligations” (Calvé-Genest & Morrison, 2015, p.1).

¹² “Social mixity”, « *la mixité sociale* », is very much a French concept that to promote social cohesion and inclusion, social diversity can be administrated. The challenge is whether each person can participate and be recognized as a full-fledged member of a group through a process of normalization and conformity while still retaining their unique individual identities and cultural backgrounds.

diversity, democracy and inclusion. These values are used to set the benchmarks in the assessment process and the objectives throughout the year, both collectively and individually. The next step in the classroom is to identify realistic goals for the class and for individuals in alignment with these values, and identify the tasks to complete and resources needed.

The spatial configuration of tables and chairs in the classroom mediates social interaction and determines the roles of participants. Teachers play the role of professing and transferring knowledge when tables are aligned as benches facing the whiteboard, the teacher is expected to provide top-down transfer and learners to imitate. When the objectives are commitment to the learning process and learning from each other, other spatial configurations are needed that promote exchange.

In M2 SSE, everyone is encouraged to participate: language learning requires activating language skills to understand each other, negotiate, and make decisions respecting the individuals, take control of their learning. Students are encouraged to modify the disposition of tables and chairs to suit their purposes and their missions. Simply moving tables already puts the class into action. They become stakeholders. Students transform themselves from knowing their place, and sitting in it, passively, into actors making choices in negotiation. Getting the students physically involved in rearranging the room is almost in itself a subversive act, a first step for students to decide how they want to organize the classroom and their learning, steps essential for learner autonomy. The classroom is reorganized to best suit the needs of the negotiation and decision-making processes¹³. Form follows function. A round circle discussion of 30 students emphasizes equity, but is extremely time-consuming for complex issues. Representative decision-making is more efficient if the members at each table of 4 to 6 students represent the diversity of the larger group and the spokesperson's mission is to respect this diversity during full class discussion. Nonetheless, students often choose to sit in zones of comfort, surrounded by those with whom they feel the most affinity, the opposite of "social mixity". Students of a feather flock together. The challenge is to promote the exchange of diversity of views, to confront one's beliefs and hone them, so discussion groups are randomly mixed to promote diversity. The most expedient process, the teacher alone deciding without consultation, is the fastest but leaves little space for dissent. These leadership and participation processes need review.

The shift from the standard teacher-directed knowledge transmission format to co-constructed flipped classrooms is a challenge for students used to having to conform to teacher expectations during evaluations. For teachers and students to work as partners, they need to express what they want in class, be it cultural content, grammar remedial work to resolve writing problems, or organizational questions.

The objective is for students to take responsibility for their learning, a radical change in paradigm. This challenge, a key step in autonomy, needs to be discussed explicitly in class for the teacher to provide the appropriate level of scaffolding, without taking over responsibility for the students in their learning process. This tension needs to be negotiated and the conflict of the representations and roles of the stakeholders is inevitable. Ultimately, if students are engaged, an English class driven by the collective contribution of all its members is much richer than a teacher paced study track. Here once again, creating group identity helps to reinforce student commitment, but the students do not see each other often enough and managing group work is not an easy task.

¹³ See the concepts of co-management and governance in the work of Borrini *et al.* (2007) on co-management of natural resources.

Creating continuity

Another major challenge is to create a sense of continuity between classes. Objectives and methods need to be explicit¹⁴. Continuity is reinforced by projects with clearly defined objectives and using an at-distance online interface, a wiki¹⁵, that allows students to interact, exchange, follow progress in projects and prepare for the next session. To facilitate sharing the biographies and projects online, and to offer the possibility to work asynchronously at distance to create continuity between classes, I propose that students use a wiki platform <http://e-scribe.pbworks.com>. The wiki offers horizontal, non-hierarchical access and editing privileges for the collective co-construction of web class content. The syllabus, schedule, a collaborative glossary of SSE terms and evaluation feedback sheets are open-access on the wiki. The wiki platform offers several key features: free access among the members to search, follow, read and comment on each other's contributions as they evolve. It encourages all the users to interact directly amongst each other on class projects rather than relying on teacher moderation. Students studying at distance in foreign countries can also participate in class and share their projects online. As this platform is new for most of the students, they need a short training period to master the functions of the wiki.

Students also have free open access to the reference language resources portal "Relais"¹⁶ at <http://relais.unistra.fr>, created by the LanSAD language teachers at the University of Strasbourg. The portal offers a wide variety of resources, including dictionaries, pronunciation practice, resources to practice and test listening comprehension, podcasts, and cultural outings in English.

Choice of the wiki as a collaborative tool

When teaching a hybrid course, combining physical classrooms and at-distance learning, a platform is needed for exchange and collaboration. Without reinventing the wheel, several options are available, such as: e-mail, Moodle, GoogleDrive, OneDrive, Facebook and the wiki. E-mail exchanges are difficult to structure, drown the users in a plethora of noise and suffer from multiple version confusion. Moodle is a top-down structure, mediated by the teacher, with only a forum for horizontal student exchange. GoogleDrive and One Drive are multiform, but offer no easy indexing possibilities, activity tracking or version comparison; they require an administrator to structure the links between documents. Ironically, Facebook is *too* user-friendly, since it is a *weapon of massive distraction*¹⁷, where the user's profile and attention are the commodities being sold, whose market value is antithetical with the values of SSE.

The wiki is not a flashy, sexy interface; it dates back to the advent of the internet, Web 1.0, as the simplest browser interface to collectively edit content on the web. The contributors

¹⁴ With the "flipped classroom", "teachers need to be more explicit about the roles they want to play, clearly explaining their purposes and rationale behind each activity. [...] Teacher statute no longer depends on the institution, but rather on the quality and importance of the relationship with the learner" (Barcelos, 2008, p.94).

¹⁵ A wiki is a website that allows users to edit content and structure collaboratively.

¹⁶ The CRL (Centre de Ressources de Langues, LanSAD, Faculté des Langues, University of Strasbourg) has created a portal of open-access resources for language learning: <http://relais.unistra.fr>, including dictionaries, listening resources with exercises, evaluation, pronunciation and writing tools. Numerous task checklists and feedback sheets are available to track progress and give constructive feedback.

¹⁷ "Contrary to what some people claim, none of us can multitask complex activities effectively. [...] Your attention ceases to be your own, pulled and pushed by algorithms. Attention is referred to as the real currency of the future." [We pay attention.] Distraction has become a commercial and political strategy, and it amounts to a form of emotional violence that cripples people, leaving them unable to gather their thoughts and overwhelmed by a sense of inadequacy. It's a powerful form of oppression dressed up in the language of individual choice." (Bunting, 2018, p. 1)

drive the structure and content, so quality depends entirely on purpose, participation and collaboration.

The wiki can help to facilitate interaction both within class and at distance, but it is not part of French student culture. Some participants are quite wary of posting any content on the wiki, for reasons of privacy. Access to student work-in-progress pages is restricted to group access by default. What poses the most difficulty is the cultural aversion to making mistakes that are visible to others. Though the wiki offers the possibility to track online co-correction and guided annotation of texts by the teacher, the sensitive point is how commentary and correction process are accepted and benefit the writer and improve content. As a platform, few students are familiar with editing a wiki, even though they have all consulted Wikipedia. Most feel susceptible to group scrutiny, especially before the texts have been corrected by an expert. What is good enough? Should content only be mediated through experts or can the students bolster a quality learning environment? Success using the wiki is intimately linked with the concept of the “flipped classroom.” If students post thoughtful, structured content on the wiki, the wiki will be worthwhile as it will emulate debate both within and outside the class. Access to student pages on the wiki is restricted to the group by default. These pages, after peer review and approval, can be published as open access Creative Commons¹⁸ resources for future M2 SSE classes. Proper preparation and engagement outside class can lead to meaningful exchange in class and beyond.

Projects in class

The value of the tasks in English needs to be intrinsically obvious for the participants, who can later apply skills and knowledge learned outside of the classroom. In M2 SSE, in addition to personal work, two specific professionally oriented projects were chosen: interview a colleague to write a biography in the third person in the form of a newspaper feature article, and, either individually or as a group of 2 to 3 students, organize a seminar about an SSE project in an English-speaking country. Each project implies personal investment of the students, valorizing their personal and career path, to practice both written and spoken English, and master the professional vocabulary.

The interview project helps students to develop the skills to valorize their experience, build confidence in the group, and recognize diversity, as the students come from all walks of life, career paths and horizons. Participants interview partners in pairs to investigate why and how they came to study SSE. Sharing these stories helps to reveal the collective diversity in the group, build common trust and reveal new potential partnerships. Students can shine and share their expertise. Skills in narrative and listening, asking open questions, and developing engaging storyline explore the potential of the members in the group and reinforce bonding and group identity. The outcome is to post personal stories written as feature articles on the group wiki. Incidentally, biographies are poignant examples to explain and illustrate the English language specificities of using the present perfect tense to connect experience with present personal identity.

The second project is for students to present an SSE project in English as part of a seminar program. This can be done either individually or a small group of up to three people. This activity helps students build the skills to investigate SSE projects in English-speaking countries, and develop presentation skills that are directly transferable to their other presentations in the Master’s program. The objective here is to develop comprehension and communication skills to analyze and present a project, identify key questions and the

¹⁸ “Creative Commons tools offer to help share your work. Our free, easy-to-use copyright licenses provide a simple, standardized way to give your permission to share and use your creative work – on conditions of your choice” (<https://creativecommons.org>).

functioning of a project, and propose perspectives for future development. The group does their research using English language resources to improve their comprehension skills, posts a complete bibliography and writes a summary of the project on the wiki. Students define key vocabulary and contribute to a collective online glossary of SSE terms started in 2008.

To improve writing skills, a progressive thinking-approach to writing protocol is used: peers proofread texts, the author corrects, and then submits to the teacher who annotates the text using Markin' software¹⁹, which offers fine-grained three-tier guidance for students to think through and resolve their writing problems. The student author can track writing improvement and progress towards mastery. Fellow students can comment any wikipage on its associated forum.

In class, besides the student project, as a teacher resource I provide short workshops in small groups to respond to individual or small group needs such as intercultural questions, specific grammar points, questions of writing style, remedial wiki workshops, structuring summaries, strategies to effectively learn vocabulary, examples of using listening resources to improve pronunciation.

Role-plays and serious games are useful tools in class to mobilize vocabulary in situations where they are required to analyze case studies and negotiate solutions to complex problems. They mediate a group discussion and debate within the class. Together, by debating in class, they develop critical analysis of SSE projects²⁰. Their projects, if accepted after peer review, become online resources on the wiki for subsequent classes. On a practical level, each participant becomes a resource for the class, part of a knowledge commons, a "think tank" of SSE in English.

Continuous evaluation and progress assessment

Learner autonomy requires reflexive evaluation (Little, 2017). Both personal and group evaluation offer feedback during the year. Nonetheless, there is a conflict between personal growth, improvement formative evaluation criteria, and the institutional guidelines for a grade. To bridge this gap, the class uses several formative assessment tools and rubrics, including personal and group assessment, communication skills assessment, both written and spoken. These rubrics intend to offer concrete, constructive evaluation of work done rather than judgements of performance. Each student maintains a personal logsheet²¹ used to identify evaluation criteria in the beginning of the year, tracks their progress and investment during the year, and completes a progress evaluation at the end. A list of personal goals and skills offers the possibility to assess progress and constructive collaboration within the group.

Working towards expertise requires formative feedback, so project rubrics offer constructive feedback between students about content and delivery. Students assess their own personal progress, investment during the year, and the quality control of written and oral productions in a self-assessment sheet that counts for one quarter of the final grade. In general, the students who are older and have chosen continuing adult education prefer self-evaluation, even if their levels in English are lower. Many of the students who prefer not to submit self-evaluation have never left school. Self-evaluation incites and requires commitment. In general, students tend to evaluate their own investment and the quality of

¹⁹ Markin' software allows teachers to annotate texts to provide progressive guidance for correction, explanations in context, remedial exercises and a summary of annotations (<https://www.cict.co.uk/markin/>).

²⁰ « *Les Essais* [de Montaigne] mettent en place un procédé dont le but est de garantir l'aspect critique du jugement : « L'alternance consiste à exploiter et investir sa propre opinion sur un sujet donné ainsi que l'opinion contraire avant de se prononcer » (Agostiti & Abernot, p.8).

²¹ The logsheet is used to keep track of daily activities, objectives, resources and what has been learned.

their productions close to the teacher evaluation²² as seen during in-class and online participation, underestimate personal progress made, and may remain aloof about investment of the group, particularly when their content or communication skills are weak. Nonetheless, in front of the teacher, they remain “soft” about evaluating their peers and group participation. Do they feel competent to evaluate each other, or perhaps is it a form of gift reciprocity in the hopes of benefitting in kind from the others? These criteria are used in continuous evaluation by the student, evaluation that is included as part of the final grade. Two “performance” grades are also included, the written summary of their research and the oral presentation. All evaluation and grading material is freely accessible on the wiki.

As part of the continuous improvement process, students can evaluate the quality of the class on an online poll at the end of the semester. The teacher’s challenge is that the institutional summative final grades out of 20 offer little guidance for the student and contradict the non-competitive values developed in class. An institutional evaluation of validated/non-validated for the English class would be more coherent²³.

Conclusion

The M2 SSE class seems to be the ideal opportunity to explore how the values of SSE can be put into practice in the classroom, examine their impact and refine teaching strategies to bolster collaborative practice. This participative process needs to be explicit, structured and evaluated to see if the values of SSE can empower all the stakeholders in the class to put into practice the core values of SSE. “In autonomous learning, self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher assessment and external-institutional exams should exist on a continuum and be mutually supporting” (Little, 2017, p.1). This process is time-consuming, reveals many deep-rooted cultural obstacles, and challenges many the educational and social habits ingrained by years of top-down normative evaluations and performance ranking. Traditional top-down teaching can expedite content transfer, but subjects remain subjected. The process of developing continuity between values, objectives, tasks and evaluation takes time if all the stakeholders are to participate in its construction and remains a challenge when the frequency of classes drops to one three-hour class per month. Online asynchronous work on the wiki does not always bridge the gap. There is still tension between the desire of students create the content in seminars in class and their investment to deliver the projects on time. Nonetheless, cooperative practice in class helps to create a sense of community within the class and develop networks for future collaboration once they leave the university. It is also an opportunity to valorize the cultural diversity of the class. As many students are not French, they offer their unique personal stories, uncovered during the biography feature articles, and their visions of the society, human relationships and solidarity. This diversity can help to develop best practice and explore the innovative possibilities afforded by the values of SSE.

If cooperative learning is worthwhile, both teachers and students need to develop the skills to explain their individual and collective interests as stakeholders in group governance, without losing sight of their personal values as guiding principles. The M2 SSE English class is the testing ground for disseminating cooperative practice in my other English classes for Master’s students on sciences in the University of Strasbourg. Success in the classroom prototype may in turn engender more collaboration between teachers to develop common

²² Teachers need to be wary of the Pygmalion effect, creating testing to validate their own preconceptions (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1971). “The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool” (Feymann, 1974).

²³ « L’innovation sociale est sous contrainte. Dans un premier temps, elle a besoin des zones d’ombres pour s’émanciper des normes en vigueur et apporter la preuve que d’autres manières de faire sont possibles. Le revers de la médaille est la fragilité qui reste à la marge des institutions » (Blanc, 2009, p.31).

curricula based on these convergent values. Compassion combined with competency, courage, and collaboration are agents for change.

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