

CHARACTERISTICS OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS

WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

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Observation of interactions between teachers and their students with learning difficulties emphasises the links between didactic and cognitive phenomena. More obviously than in any other environment, the status of interactions and knowledge seems to be two-faced. Students and teachers have to play both the didactic game and the apprenticeship game.

- ◆ One usual conception of teachers could be “when teaching to students with learning difficulties, one is not to let them inactive”. Thus, maintaining and showing off external activity under the pretence of an effective cognitive activity can become the major rule structuring the didactic game. Vannier-Benmostapha and Merri explain how teachers may support this phenomenon in scaffolding interactions. In order to understand how students may face this mechanism, Pichat focuses on the students’ pragmatic knowledge : a low level knowledge that allows them to maximise efficiency despite lack of real competency (Pichat and Ricco, in press). Therefore, transfer of responsibility concerning knowledge and skills may not develop in a proper way.
- ◆ However, we observe a few students taking advantage of such interactions. Two issues are presented. At a control level, they internalise the structure and the content of former conversational interactions ; by this means, students develop self-control procedures which are isomorphic to the injunctions of the teacher. In this case, the teacher has a chance to be relevantly imitated. Moreover, a second benefit comes from experiencing functional limitations of their pragmatic knowledge ; in such a case, pragmatic knowledge may be re-elaborated so as to be more efficient.

Getting teachers to be aware of these two phenomena could be useful for a better control of the effective cognitive benefit of their students.

Pichat et Ricco. *What is the nature of mathematical conceptualisation in didactic institutions ?* , Cognitive systems, in press.

Vannier-Benmostapha, M.P. *Analyse des tâches et des schèmes de tutelle d’enseignants de C.M.2, 4^{ème} technologique et CLIPA.*, doctoral dissertation (director : Gérard Vergnaud), Université Paris V-René Descartes, in preparation.