

## CHAPTER 8

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### At the Crossroads of Action-oriented Pedagogy and Online Teaching during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Constraints and Recommendations

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

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In March 2020, the French president, Emmanuel Macron, clearly stated that France, and other countries, are “in a war against an invisible enemy” which is the Coronavirus. He also announced a plan to fight against this virus as he ordered citizens to stay at home to protect themselves and others. University teaching practice is, without any doubt, one of the areas which are heavily impacted by the new measures taken to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure pedagogical continuity and feasibility of activities, teachers, administrators and businesses had to work together to adapt training to the current context. Consequently, distance pedagogy is implemented as an immediate solution after the schools and universities were compelled to close doors. In this research work, we propose to analyze the effectiveness and the relevance of e-learning in the case of “action-oriented pedagogy”. In fact, while it is easy to move to distance education in several fields, it seems difficult to foresee online teaching for very specific competences requiring interaction and develop the tools to use. The aim of this article is to draw up an inventory of the perceptions and the difficulties encountered by Lansad<sup>2</sup> teachers, who are teaching the four language skills, in French universities. I also want to know how teachers adapt their language classroom activities to cope

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participated in this study report having partially or totally modified their classrooms tasks to meet the requirements of the new language course format. Some have explained that the activities which needed a lot of collaborative and interactive work were not easy to achieve.

Furthermore, the data obtained from the open-ended items of the questionnaire reveal that the teachers, all along the online teaching experience, went through different psychological, social and practical difficulties. But, contrary to what we tend to think, this experience didn't always have negative outcomes because it is viewed by many teachers as a stimulating, successful and rich experience (see Table 1) in which they had to meet new challenges and to experiment something they are not used to.

This research could have implications for the successful implementation of the action-oriented pedagogy for online learning environments, but there are some limitations that must be considered. Firstly, only a small number of participants took part to the study. This limits the generalizability of the findings. The second limitation concerns the use of the questionnaires for data collection. Questionnaires provide self-reported information; hence, the respondents' answers may not reflect the reality (Angers, 1997) of the online language classroom, and the researcher could not observe how the language courses are really conducted. Therefore, I recommend that further studies on online action-oriented pedagogy should adopt other research designs.

In sum, there remains much work to do especially that the Covid-19 has transformed pedagogy in profound ways and, may be, it will continue to do so. Some researchers have even found that learners make little or no progress in learning (Engzell, Freya & Verhagen, 2020) and that well-being of learners (Burns, Dagnall & Holt, 2020) and teachers is affected since the schools and universities are closed. In France, and many other countries, universities are gradually reopening but we should always be prepared for any contingency. So, it is important to foresee things and to work together for better outcomes.

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