Role play in French negotiation language skills

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Context

• Final assessment of a Year 4 French language module – with similar set ups in German, Spanish and English
• Brings together top language oral skills (vocabulary, structures, ability to produce spontaneously relevant language) and business content
• Active involvement of students in the designing of their own negotiation scenario
• Constructivist approach: series of pre-tasks leads to final role play with growing ownership of scenario(s) by individual students
Build up to the French business negotiation

- Start-up material: series of **case studies** based on successful French companies in various sectors / basis of two-way **interpreting scenarios** for all case studies
- Students research French market for particular product / service and identify a new entrant - **report in French**
- Students produce **outline of negotiation scenario** with attribution of roles and points to be negotiated
- Co-production on D-day: **negotiation role play** between student and tutor
Structure of role plays

- Follows a series of steps (introductions/small talk/agenda/negotiation points / summing up / leave) – the student is in the lead
- Mix of predictable and non-predictable cues from negotiator facing the student
- Students use realia (price lists, objects, photos, business card) to add credibility to the scenario
- Acting allows to take on a different persona and use a wider range of arguments
Students’ views

“Although this module has been challenging I believe the skills learned will be extremely useful in our professional life later on.”

“Very practical and useful learning skills to use outside university.”

“Useful in the real world”

Emphasis on knowledge gained through challenge / increased confidence in French

Positive comments on the scaffolding e.g. case studies, interpreting
• Ongoing challenge: finding relevant business negotiations examples (due to confidentiality)
• Continued development of database of case studies
• Possible developments:
  - Involvement of a company in the development of a ‘live’ negotiation / mentoring
  - Co-production of interpreting scenarios
Thank you for your attention
Any questions?