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Introduction to the Conference

This conference, organized with the participation of three institutions, is addressed to researchers, teachers, practitioner/trainers and instructors, as well as to management and labor. In this sense, it is based on the mutual recognition of a diversity of functions. Its original title makes reference to the topic of the question of language in the workplace and how it is addressed in training. Today, the recognition of the selection of language practices in methods of evaluation and in appreciation interviews. In addition, the plural of languages authorizes one to think of different kinds of language (oral, written, symbolic, gestural, corporal practices, etc.).

The way of thinking being proposed is both interesting, because it takes as its focus identity and society, and confused, because it is linked to the status of an emerging field of study. The complexity of the relationship between technical instruction and general instruction, the scientific analysis of the workplace environment allowed by the Social Sciences, knowledge of the articulation of adult training in the workplace which are elements close to the social dimension, were determining factors in the construction of this conference.

The field of research is defined by French didactics and the technical sciences, information and communication sciences, techniques of expression, and theoretical approaches to workplace situations.

The idea is located at the interface of education, training and the workplace environment with socio-technical and linguistic reference practices.

Four hypotheses of work underlie the conference.

1. Work and language are intimately linked.
2. Written and communicational activities are professional activities which have not yet received real and symbolic recognition.
3. The consideration that the kinds of language in the workplace constitute a major focus in initial and continuous training.
4. Access to linguistic abilities is at issue in democracy.

Five major themes have been derived from the résumés of the paper abstracts for this colloquium:

1. The theme of Engineering for the construction of training mechanisms and programs
2. The technical theme, linked to the creation of training based on contributions from new technologies
3. Mutual recognition of and consideration for the aspects of language in the training environment
4. The theme of prospective thought and innovation
5. The positioning of work in relation to social and political issues