Revisit the notion of situation: plural approaches

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Pierre PASTRE

Learning situation and conceptualization

When we speak of situation, it is important to articulate three concepts: situation, activity, learning. On the one hand, all human activity in a situation unfolds. On the other hand, we learn of situations when they involve a problem, which requires the learner an activity of conceptualization. The text can be divided in two parts: the first part is an epistemological; it proposes a debate between the proponents of the theory of enaction and the supporters of the conceptualization in action, theory which relates the author. The second part, empirical, shows two examples of how professional learnings combine conceptualization and the use of experience.

Marc BRU & Joël CLANET

The situation of teaching-learning: contextual and built characters

The setting accounts for many conditions (social, psychological, organizational, material) in which, and with which, the teaching practices develop in their relationships to the learning behaviors. Among the dynamic dimensions characterizing the setting, we have noticed that some of them such as time management, the task in hand, interactions between student(s)/teacher and teacher/student(s) organize configurations of practices more than others do. Interactive modalities initiated by the teacher and related to some degrees of difficulty encountered by students faced with the task proposed by the teacher can, for instance, be an explanation for the degree of mastering literacy at the end of the school year. Therefore, the setting cannot be considered as the sole arena data characterizing the conditions in which the teaching/learning practices are implemented for the setting is constructed by those involved in the education and more particularly by the person who is responsible for its functioning: the teacher.
Bernard REY

Can pupils learn from situations?

According to a widespread idea, pupils learn by encountering situations. How do we have to consider the concept of situation to support such an idea? Is it possible that knowledge arises from situations? This text analyzes the difficulties that this theory entails. It tries to reveal the links between the notion of situation and those of competence and knowledge. It leads to an important distinction between context and situation.

Yves LENOIR & Arturo ORNELAS LIZARDI

The Concept of Situation for Paulo Freire: a Socio-Anthropological, Cultural, and Political Perspective

This article presents the conception of the notion of situation in the thought of Paulo Freire. Stressing the emancipatory aim pursued by this educator of international renown, the text draws on several of his writings to highlight the socio-anthropological, cultural, and political conception of the notion. After having distanced itself from various interpretations of Freire’s works which we judge to be simplistic, the text approaches the notion of situation by dissecting it so as to identify the educational process here conveyed. This educational process leads from the situation—existential, concrete, and anchored in the everydayness of life—to awareness requiring a dialectical task of scientific conceptualization via the “limit-situation” and the “problem-situation.” The article then offers up a comparison of the Freirian perspective with certain aspects of the conceptions of Bourdieu, Vygotsky, Brousseau, and Vergnaud in view of revealing common points or differences.

François AUDIGIER

The concept of situation in the didactic of history, geography and citizenship education

After a certain fortune in its association with the word problem, the concept of situation is once again returned to the forefront with the didactics concerns of educational curricula by competences. These require necessarily a renewed reflection on the situations. Indeed, skills are built and implemented in situation. They also focus on specific objects. Thus, history, geography and citizenship education, the main social science disciplines present at the compulsory school, study human actions in past and present societies. The term situation therefore refers to two different realities: the teaching situation as it is organized and implemented by the teacher and the past or present social reality being studied. In this text, the author draws a course from the examination of some aspects of the relationship between skills and situations to the proposition of two times two distinctions to describe understand and analyze the teaching-learning situations. For the latter point, he relies on a research on Education for Sustainable Development led by a Frenchspeaking Swissresearchteam.
Joaquim DOLZ & Frédéric TUPIN

The concept of situation in the study of language learning and teaching phenomena: towards a Socio-didactic perspective

This article is in line with a progression which has given rise to reflections and to several successive publications initiated in 2006. After having tried to extend the boundaries of the concept of situation and of its use in order to understand teaching and learning phenomena in the light of sociology contribution (Tupin, 2006) then having called for a joint comprehension of the "epistemological subject" and of the "social subject", through the organization of a dialogue between didactics and sociology (Tupin & Dolz, 2008), the present article aims at revisiting the stratification of the concept of situation and of its use, from the specific perspective of the co-presence of languages in society, schools and classrooms. This text highlights a set of registers, in which the concept of situation is summoned and contributes to interventionist approaches to language didactics. In this respect, the characteristics of the linguistic material seem to confront the didactic system with the specific object of language knowledge and practice at work in the educational context. The transversal quality of this object which encompasses very different statuses, many contents and significant variations of use, questions the connections to make between classrooms "internal phenomena" and "external phenomena". This heterogeneity which characterizes both the educational situations and their didactic interpretations must be highlighted through the intersectional approaches of sociolinguistics and language didactics. The next step will be to revitalize a model that will link up through the dialectical movement that binds them, the "internal side" and the "external side" of teaching and learning situations.

Johanne LEBRUN, Abdelkrim HASNI & Anderson ARAUJO-OLIVEIRA

Problem situations and school matters: analysis of operational frames favoured by future teachers of primary school in Quebec in the teaching of sciences and social studies

Based on research data, this text identifies and analyzes various operational frames favoured by future teachers of primary school in Quebec when it comes to structuring and implementing problem situations in the teaching of sciences and social studies. The analysis shows that the five operational frames identified generate teaching-learning situations that largely mark a departure from the characteristics of a problem situation. These frames share certain common points—namely privileging one or another of the constitutive dimensions of meaning and being underpinned by a pedagogical-didactic and cognitive mediation—which lie on the fringes of disciplinary knowledge and the principle of intelligibility of disciplines. In this sense, despite ministry prescriptions in line with the need for problematized and situated learning, the operational modes of this prescription remain problematic.

Varia

Emilie DUBOIS

Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994), a contemporary teacher

The city of Reggio Emilia, in the North of Italy, has been the scene of an unusual preschool experience since 1963. A real network of thirty-four municipal early childhood services (infant-toddler centers and preschools)
has been created by instituting a characteristic education, often described as an alternative education. Loris Malaguzzi (1920 – 1994), the founder of this approach, really inspired by the greatest figures of the Progressive Education, always in search of how it is possible to realise his educational dream, in the vanguard of the scientific research, has been caring on a real struggle to provide the children of his town with high quality preschool services. So, who really was this character, protagonist of this great pedagogical success?

Amélie ALLETRU

Professional construction by the quest for a common language, the case of novice teachers in nursery class

This article presents a metaphorical interpretation of efforts provided by novices in building up the gestures necessary for their job. Attempting to integrate a professional community, beginners have no choice, in the course of their first work experiences, but to learn its codes, its relations between subject, matter of work and other actors, in a system of interactions they discover from the inside: they are in search of a “common language” within that universe. Based on a study carried out with trainee primary teachers at the time of their first practice in nursery classes, the articulation of professional didactics, activity clinic and “course of action” frameworks allows one to consider characteristic features of that learning of a “common language”, whose mastery then means actual professionalism.