Of the observation of the teaching practices

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Summary of articles

- **MARC BRU**
  The choice of observation for the study of teaching practices

  The choice of observation to study teaching practices is widely recognized. Nevertheless, it arouses a critical look; without question, it allows to continue the debate in order to locate objectives and issues. The article attempts to reactivate some of the elements of this debate all the more necessary. On the one hand, case design tools methodology sometimes dominates the research training. On the other hand, social and institutional demands are often waiting to see finally identified best practices. In addition, epistemological options are quick to confine the observation in a kind of strict objectivism. This results in the tendency to define categories and establish oppositions on the latter, which ultimately reduces and damages research perspectives.

- **CHANTAL AMADE-ESCOT**
  The need of a didactical observation to account for teachers’ practical epistemology

  This article is about the relevance of a didactical observation of ordinary teaching to account for “teachers’ practical epistemology”. Over the last years, teachers’ knowledge, beliefs and know-how have been the focus of various research paradigms on teaching and became a substantial area of inquiry. In this paper, it is claimed that understanding teachers’ practices needs to document in details how knowledge is enacted through didactical interactions within a pragmatic perspective of human activities. The paper gives an overview of the theoretical framework and the analytical tools used. The study of teacher and students didactical joint action allows depicting how knowledge is mobilized and the important role of teacher’s practical epistemology in this process. Drawing on a body of works in physical education, three dimensions of the teacher’s practical epistemology are then discussed through research excerpts.

- **THIERRY PIOT**
  Observing teaching practices: the case for historic and cultural psychology: a framework to characterize the visible and invisible dimensions of teachers’ work

  To understand precisely what teachers’ work really involves, it is necessary to observe teachers in the classroom notably. To do so, researchers define an approach and a method according to the theoretical framework within which they carry out their research. For over fifty years, a succession of theoretical frameworks and teacher observation methodologies have developed. In this study, research is carried out from the theoretical framework of historic and cultural psychology, which is interesting notably in that it takes into account the two distinct and complementary dimensions of that kind of work: the visible dimension, and the invisible dimension which consists mainly in the cognitive activity of the teacher. As far as methodology is concerned, visible activity is recorded by digital camera, and invisible activity is inferred from explanatory interviews carried out with teachers whose classes are filmed. All this information helps to better understand the complexity of teachers’ work, which combines unvarying elements and elements arising from the context and the dynamics of pupil-teacher interactions.
LINE NUMA-BOCAGE

Observation as a psychological tool for the researcher and the teacher

The aim of this article is to propose a reflexive analysis on researches using observation methodology. This observation concerns the pupils' cognitive activity, the teacher's professional activity and the interwoven relations within these activities. The stress is laid on the results of such utilisations on the observations of the teachers' professional activities. The aim of the professional activities of the teacher is among other things to follow the development of the knowledge of each pupil, mainly based on the information gathered on the learner's level of reasoning and his/her behaviour throughout his/her period of learning. The examples studied in the first year of primary school, according to the French system (concerning children of average age between 6 and 7) during the first steps of their learning period of the numbers. The results of such researches show us that the analysis on the teacher's activity while under observation, will become more precise and more acute when performed by the said teacher together with the researcher, as a team work, during their exchanges and autoconfrontations centred around the learners’ knowledge in mathematics. This observation then led by the researcher's questions is said to be implemented (according to Vygotski). The said implementation is bound to bring on changes in the teacher's professional practices as well as in her didactic mediation.

CHRISTINE FELIX, RENE AMIGUES & LAURENCE ESPINASSY

Observing teachers' work

The purpose of this article is to highlight the role played by observation in the analysis of the teaching activity from a work point of view. It aims to show how the methodological framework of "self-confrontations" represents an environment from which the experience embodied by teaching staff becomes "disembodied" through observation subject to a co-analysis between trained professionals and researchers. Firstly, the epistemological and theoretical bases for observation, designed as an operational method and source of knowledge production, will be presented. Its role in the analysis of the activity will be placed with respect to the various forms and positions of the observer and those observed, which will enable the epistemological status of the video to be investigated in the observation made of teachers. Then the role of video as an artefact in a methodological framework designed to foster teacher self-confrontation - an activity that is not in the least spontaneous - will be presented. We will, using the analysis of a few excerpts, show the socially-built character of the springs and mechanisms at work in the self-confrontation in relation to the development of professional experience. Finally, the discussion will return to the subjects, time and environment of the observation in which the teacher's body remains a poorly identified object.

PHILIPPE CHAUSSECOURTE

A psychoanalytically oriented clinical observation of teaching practices

This paper concerns what has been termed the clinical observation of teaching practices. It will situate this approach from the epistemological standpoint within the general context of observation practices in the human sciences. This specific orientation falls within the domain of the clinical, psychoanalytically oriented approach in Education Science. Having briefly resumed certain focal aspects of this approach, the paper will define a number of basic points on the subject of observation, notably taking care to evoke the notion of objective perception. It will then put the approach into perspective by evoking a selection of references that are indispensable for defining the connection of clinical observation to psychoanalysis. Having done this, it will briefly define the sense in which the work involves direct observation, and the use made in it of the term "practises." The debate on the relation of observation and psychoanalysis will then be evoked, and this will open the way to the last part of the paper which proposes an "ultra-clinical," psychoanalytically-oriented approach to teaching practises. References will be made throughout the article to E. Bick's method for the observation of babies, one of its main sources of inspiration.
JEAN-FRANÇOIS MARCEL

Teaching practices carried narrative

This methodology-oriented article presents a study of teachers’ practices along five steps. Based on stories, it calls for the interest in reconciling action and story. This approach mobilizes observation devices and interviews and defends the use of three different stories (the story of the observer, the story of the teacher and the story of the practices according to the principle of double reading), each structured by a narrative pattern. The article also analyzes the epistemological foundations of this method through a theoretical clarification of “teacher practices”, which in connection with the work of OPEN, leads to a quaternary model and clarifies research orientations and standpoints in connection with the researcher’s engagement.

ALAIN JEAN

Observations of student teachers’ practices. What evolutions of the professional knowledges?

The training of the teachers underwent numerous reforms these last years. The observation of the student teachers’ practices, through the activity which they mobilize in situation of class, could allow to detect professional knowledges in elaboration or stabilization. This article give some results of a longitudinal research led in 2011, which consisted in observing student teachers’ practices during a school year. Video recordings of class and autoconfrontations were regularly led with three student teachers during their year of training in responsibility of class. In a more precise way, our question of research concerned the evolutions of the observable practices. What forms can take these evolutions of practices, which typifies of a possible professional development bound to these evolutions at the teachers trainees in situations of responsibility of class? What elements build these practices? What type of professional development builds itself for the student teachers? A review of literature on the professional knowledges allowed us to develop our conception of this concept. The article centers on the professional knowledges mobilized by these novice teachers and on their evolution during the school year.

CORINNE MERINI, SERGE THOMAZET & PASCALE PONTE

Observation of the collaboratives practices of « maître E »

Methodology of observation cannot be separated from the position of the researcher, the standpoint he adopts to observe, the history of the construction of the object and the way this object takes place in the profession. Relying on the work of a specialist teacher « maître E », and especially of the part of his job that rely him with colleagues, parents and professionals, we explore in this paper the methodological question of observation of collaborative practices of this teachers who are not in charge of a classroom. These practices leave an important part to context effects and requires the researcher to rethink the unit of observation, the conditions of access to specific information, as well as crossing of diversified data (professional writings, video recordings, self-confrontation interviews...), with a sufficient longitudinally. The special characteristics of collaborative practices led us to diversify triangulations. Finally, we point limitations of our work.

YVES LENOIR

Observation of Teaching Pratices: A Sociological Approach

This article presents the sociological approach that characterizes processes of observing teaching practices as studied by the Canada Research Chair in Educative Intervention (CRCIE). The first part of the text defines what is here understood by observation. The second traces the research itinerary we have pursued, including components of successive research programs, in order to develop a conceptual frame of reference along with progressive foundations for this frame and the methodological procedures used to put it into practice. To conclude, the article summarizes the chief characteristics of the observation methodology in use before announcing new research orientations put into practice.
GUILLAUME AZEMA & SERGE LEBLANC
About the interest of questioning improvisational activity of new teachers

Within the framework of a situated cognitive anthropology, our research focuses on the description-understanding of new teachers' improvisational activity, in class as a dynamic environment. We will try to clarify how they improvise, when they think they are improvising. We view improvisation as a crucial space of self-creation, as well as a process which could bring to light a dimension of the activity still little taken into account in professional development though and tutoring reflexions.

MARIELLE BOISSART
The Master's thesis in Nursing Training in France: an example of a socio-constructivist orientated scheme

In France, bringing the training of nurses to a university level has made Nursing Research a major issue, within the development of that vocational experience. Developing the required skills to address the population's health needs represents a true challenge. So as to answer to this dual movement towards university training and professionalization, educational thoughts rank first in the building up of the training schemes. In this article, we are proposing an research experiment within our institution which focuses on a socio-constructivist approach. This way, the students are putting forward an individual training presentation, related to their Master's Thesis in front of their peers, and a jury composed of executive health trainers. At the starting point of an aprioristic research methodology, the spheres of psychology, sociology and anthropology highlight the impact of an interactive educational approach on the professionalization process of the student, during the preparation of the Master of Research. The results emphasize the fact that the memorandum plays its part in the student's professionalization thanks to the conceptualization it induces, and the reflexiveness ability related to it. However, those results clearly emphasize too, that knowledge can't possibly be acquired within social interaction alone. Actually, the role of an executive health trainer is that of a mediator and a regulator of the students' learning processes, so as to turn the interpersonal processes into intrapersonal ones.

REMI BONASIO ET PHILIPPE VEYRUNES
Homework: a social practice at the crossroads of educational spaces?

French research on homework are quiet recent. They complete the Anglo-Saxon literature on that topic which essentially considered homework in their statistical relationship to academic achievement. We draw up a synthesis of the most recent works to understand this subject's social construction. We focus on the links between work inside and outside the classroom gathering teachers, pupils, families and extracurricular leaders. These research point out several difficulties generated by this practice, learning inequality's construction in particular. Studying this practice requires to deal with different educational spaces crossed by issues sometimes convergent and often divergent : a complexity we may consider.

ALFRED ROMUALD GAMBOU
Education as care of the self

The old Greco-Roman tradition has ontologically conceived about human position in the relation subject-truth, this is also one of the main characteristics of its educational paradigm. Indeed, if the interpretation of this relationship was the understanding of care for the self concept, it has also structured different philosophical schools orientation including those from Socrates and Zeno of Citium, while giving each one its version in its interpretative pattern. The problem is that modernity does not hesitate to break with the ontological structure, which was his “spirituality”. Thus defined, a break in this relationship subject-truth did not fail consequences in the context of modern formation of man. The aim of this research is not only to understand the operation of each school pattern mentioned before but also to understand their ramifications in history, thereby to question the relevance of our contemporary education, self transformation and teaching professional ethics.
ELISABETH MENOUAR & DANIEL BART
National assessments at primary school: Implementation and discipline characteristics

This article presents research conducted on national assessments in French and Mathematics at primary school and more precisely on how they are implemented in classrooms. On the basis of different classroom observations, conversations with teachers and the study of official documents, we analyze how these assessments are implemented and highlight the characteristics proper to each discipline. Our analysis shows the inconstancy in the guidelines applied to tests, the variability of the practices in terms of instructions and the tensions related to time management during the sessions. Our conclusions lead to methodological questions and research opportunities on the process of the institutional assessments.

MARIE-PAULE POGGI & MATHILDE MUSARD
Sense of learning in primary school in physical education

This study focuses on the meaning that students give to their learning experience in physical education (PE) in primary school, ie in relation to knowledge they develop. The aim is to better understand the sense the students give to the learning settings and to identify which registers of activities they mobilize to succeed and learn in PE. Sixty-five students from 10 different classes (from CE1 to CM2), stemming from two sociologically contrasted schools, were questioned in the form of interviews during the lesson. The results show that the report to learn it manufactures both in duration, repetition, based on internalized habits, but also in interactions with teachers, peers, or even outside of school (family, club ...). It therefore seems fruitful to cross the individual and the social, the subject's past and present interactions, inside and outside the classroom to better understand the relationship to knowledge of students in PE.