Students, learning materials and inequalities

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**Summary of articles**

- **ÉLIANE PAUTAL**
  
  *Differentiated uses of pedagogical documents in science: study of some reasons*
  
  This article deals with the use of a document, drafted by the teacher, in teaching and learning about the concept of blood circulation at primary school. We believe that the use of this document in the classroom might explain, partly, the production of inequality during science learning and we focus on understanding some of the reasons that could motivate these differentiated uses. The case study offers didactic interpretation by mobilizing an analytical framework of the practices developed by Sensevy et al. (Sensevy, Mercier & Schubauer-Leoni, 2000; Sensevy & Mercier, 2007; Sensevy, 2011), along with the concept of relationship to knowledge (Charlot, Bautier & Rochex, 1992; Charlot, 1997; Bautier & Rochex, 1998; Bautier & Goigoux, 2004; Bautier & Rayou, 2009). This double theoretical framework allows us to shed light on the production of inequality in science class, referring in part to the teacher and/or to the pupils and the institution.

- **PATRICIA RICHARD-PRINCIPALLI & MARIE-FRANÇOISE FRADET**
  
  *The composite in children’s books and its differentiating effects: an example in first grade classes*
  
  Ongoing research carried out by Circeft-Escol shows that today’s schools use more composite learning materials, which are linked to school literacy, but have differentiating effects. In French schools, children's books became learning stakes, a trend that has been encouraged by the school since 2002. In 2007 the French Secretary of Education published a literature reference list for first-grade classes. So we seek to identify criteria of children’s books composite: semiotic heterogeneity and discursive heterogeneity. We analyze two children's books, a simple and a complex one, which were read out by the teachers in a first grade classroom in an underprivileged suburban area and in a first grade classroom in a “standard” urban area. Student's comprehension has been assessed by a free text recall. The analysis tends to confirm that composite children's books have differentiating effects.

- **CATHERINE DELARUE-BRETON & JACQUES CRINON**
  
  *Meanings: circulation, wanderings and heterogeneous texts*
  
  In this study, we aim to highlight some ways in which students manage or fail to establish connections between heterogeneous elements when reading composite – therefore non-linear – texts (Bautier et al., 2012), and when using multiple semiotic systems or verbal statements with various targets. In particular, we want to show that some students’ are able to establish continuity between the various elements coming from these materials, while others find it more difficult. We also examine their ability to link various elements coming from these materials or other elements from their own experience. In this context, the teacher’s role will be studied, especially the way he/she helps students make connections. We will analyse:
  - the choice of material
  - the choice of educational devices (implementation, development)
  - the arbitration during the students' verbal exchanges
  - the way each student’s personal experience is taken into account.
**ARIANE RICHARD-BOSSEZ**

*The worksheet in French preschools: a paradoxical literacy object*

This article is about the role played by worksheets in the building of knowledge in French preschool and the differentiations that these teaching aids can produce. It is built on a field study carried out in six classes of grande section (third and last year of preschool, intended for 5/6-year old children) from different social backgrounds. This article describes three dimensions related to the use of worksheets in preschool classes which, when they are combined, participate to differentiations in the construction of the pupil’s knowledge. First, it shows that worksheets are not neutral mediums insofar as they are based on a specific learning mode and they contribute to shaping the knowledge itself. Then, it presents the different registers from which pupils interpret worksheets, by stressing that only a minority of pupils rely on a literacy mode which corresponds to school expectations. Finally, it underlines how the material dimension the worksheets tends to strengthen the least literacy approaches to knowledge. Thus, this article leads to a better understanding of how worksheets fail to allow pupils to integrate the literacy dimension if they do not master it previously, and how the relation to knowledge and the materiality of these teaching aids contribute, on the contrary, to reinforcing the registers which are most distant from school expectations.

**HELOÏSE DURLER**

*Teaching tools of autonomy*

This contribution is based on an ethnographic study on teaching practices regarding primary school student autonomy. It highlights the tools used in observed classes and the intellectual prerequisite abilities of students. It deals with the plurality of these tools used by the students, in particular those considered “deviant” by teachers. Deviance categories are analyzed as indications of prerequisite skills existence. They contribute to the formation of social inequalities in the first years of schooling because they are not explicitly objectified and taught.

**CATHERINE BOYER, CORA COHEN-AZRIA & ABDELKARIM ZAÏD**

*A logbook of experiments and observations for 5-8 year students: a scientific tool?*

Since the 2000s, the pupils from kindergarten to secondary school have to use a new tool: the notebook of experiences and observations (CEO) which should develop learning, simultaneously improving the command over the language, group life, and the acquisition of scientific skills. The meaning of this learning constructed by the pupils, and of which the CEO keeps track, will be analysed with the help of the notion of subject consciousness developed by Yves Reuter (2003, 2007). It is defined as the manner in which the academic actors (re)construct academic disciplines and permits a closer look at the difficulties that pupils experience. This article therefore, presents some results of a study aimed at analysing how the consciousness of scientific disciplines is constructed by the pupils of kindergarten and grade 2 with the help of the CEO. What does the CEO looks like? What are the actual activities carried out by the students? What do pupils retain of the use of the CEO? We will analyse the productions of the pupils whose entry into writing is difficult or easier, and will then cross-reference them with both interviews conducted at the end of their work and class observations.

**STEPHANE VAQUERO**

*Telling the learning process. Cognitive and social results of logbooks for the “Guided personal assignments”*

As part of the “Guided personal assignments”, each student has to write a logbook aiming to guide their research. Often seen as a minor tool, students can fill them artificially and rebuild them after their research. Teachers, as far as they are concerned, give more or less importance to this process according to their subjects. If these different uses of the logbook generate different kinds of cognitive socialization, they also lead teachers to appreciate the writing abilities of their students when it comes to talking about themselves or to taking an impartial and structured look at their own learning process. These writing abilities peculiar to the educational way of thinking, forged and transmitted during secondary school, lead up to some forms of school domination, including when it is based on “free” activities and loose instructions (Bernstein, 1975).
SEVERINE DE CROIX & JESSICA PENNEMAN

Is Reading and Navigating a Portfolio of Informative Texts Teachable in Middle School?

This article presents the early results of a quasi-experimental and longitudinal research on the teaching practice of reading and writing informative texts and the related skills needed to succeed in school. Some findings about frequently used supports in the Belgian public school system will be explained. Those supports for informative texts are characterized by a versatility of form, which brings some difficulties for the students. Obstacles in changing the pedagogical practice of teachers will also be discussed. The research will reflect upon the data collected before and after a sequence of lessons implemented in classes of first-year secondary students (12-13 year olds) and the related speech of teachers. The title of this sequence is: "Getting to know the use of informative explanatory and justifiable texts". Based on these findings, the study highlights some approaches to promote good classroom practices.

GERMAIN SIMONS, DANIEL DELBRASSINE & FLORENCE VAN HOOF

Risks of inequality pertaining to some characteristics of modern textbooks used in foreign language classes in Belgium’s French Community

French-speaking Belgian teachers often use textbooks in their foreign language classes, especially at elementary and intermediate levels. Most modern textbooks follow the communicative approach which is based on four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing). A few more recent textbooks adopt the action-oriented approach recommended by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, based on tasks that have to be fulfilled in a given set of circumstances. These textbooks have lots of qualities such as the richness of the language input and the variety of learning activities; nevertheless, they also share some features that can lead to unequal learning. This is especially true when students use the textbooks at home. In this article, three textbooks (English, German, and Spanish) are examined in the light of learning (in)equality. Results show that they share the following features: the drafting language of the textbook, the length and density of the units, the units’ heterogeneous and composite nature, the inductive and “spiral” approach to grammar explanations, the lack of open-ended exercises preparing students for the complex final task, to name a few. Teachers may reduce these risks through their use of the textbooks in class provided they are aware of these characteristics and of their possible impact on unequal learning.

Varia

SYLVIANE BLANC-MAXIMIN

Heritage education in primary school: a citizenship education?

This article is interested in the possible links between heritage education and citizenship education in the French primary school when pupils from 9 to 12 years old make heritage with objects or immaterial elements in their villages. The study of the educational device, the follow-up of its real progress during debates in class and during a collective exposure as well as results of a questionnaire to 90 pupils show that this type of heritage education participle of the acquisition of skills of "to live together".

GILBERT DAOUAGA SAMARI

Legislation for National Languages and Cultures in Cameroon: Audience Measurement in the Adamawa Region and Glottopolitical Implications

The ban of National Languages and Cultures from schools during the colonial period has been maintained even after 1960, the year of Independence of Cameroon. It means that the Language Policy implemented, which consisted to use French and English as Languages of Instruction had not changed. The result is that students could not use the Languages they mastered; they should learn through those they did not use. It is in 1996 that Cameroon began to take measures in favor of National Languages; until today, there are official texts which support the use of these Languages in Education. However, a survey we carried out in the Adamawa Region shows that most educational Actors do not know these texts. Our view is that this could slow down the Implementation of this new policy.
ALAIN GARCIA

School words and educational pattern

Talk about the school words is really talk about school jargon, initials and acronyms. In French middle school and French high school, it seems that less noticed terms are more important. "School Life", "administration", "authority" and "pedagogy" seem natural, so protected from questionings. Four notions, nevertheless, proceed from semantic constructions and from major ideological stakes. In spite of their polysemy, "school life", "administration" and "authority" assert the same school order, the same scale of values, the same statutory ranks and the same powers. In this view, the duality between teachers and non-teachers is the first education of the School. In this two-tier logic answers an other fact, confirmed by the semantic use. The "pedagogy" is located in the theoretical center of the school activity, but the "pedagogy" is rarely evoked in its practical aspects. Maybe to protect the closed door of the classroom and the difficulties of their implementation, the actors of French high schools and French middle schools speak about "pedagogy" in a reified sense and a motionless feeling. The true meaning of "teaching staff", "educational freedom" or pedagogical deed, is never debated.

CLAIRE BONNARD, JULIEN CALMAND & JEAN-FRANÇOIS GIRET

Become a researcher or an associated professor: the "taste" for research versus the reality of the labour market

Doing a PhD to become a researcher or an assistant-professor is often considered as a difficult and risky career. In France, PhD graduates experience greater difficulties than in other OCDE countries to find a stable position in the labour market. Our research examines the reasons that lead young people to enroll in a doctoral program, to choose an academic career and finally, to find a tenured job. Using a survey implemented by the Cereq on university leavers, our results show that the "taste" for research they have when they enter in higher education and their social capital strongly influence their academic and professional careers. However, variables related to the general situation on the labor market will also influence young people's trajectories.

ÉMILIE OSMONT

Freedom, education and power. Non directive reading from the work of Daniel Hameline

The Renaissance humanism ordered education for freedom and, typically, philosophy usually links the concept of freedom with the idea of political community, whose power is one of the attributes. But when we want to think the relation between freedom, education and power in pedagogic terms, we come up against requirements of praxis: it is not enough to think, it is also about to do. Concretely. Then to tell it. About that, Daniel Hameline's non-directive experience and books written with Marie-Joëlle Dardelin, are an example at a specific time crossing as much by social protest movements, including about School, as theories on relations of power in the French education system. This paper first describes non-directive teaching function comparing with the traditional function, in order to highlight the asymmetry of a relationship experiencing an institutional order. Although this was not his intent, non-directivity is then presented as a challenge to the political order established by focusing on the conditions of creation to the detriment of what is already existing. But the valuation of the actor has limits, the very ones who make the school game, and the emancipation of child can not be though without his subjugation. Between liberalization and ending school system, Daniel Hameline choose the "middle way" with critical education.