Chapter 9
The Use of Video Recording in the Study and Conceptualization of the Didactic Transposition Process: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This research is born of a dual interest: on one hand in the concept of didactic transposition, i.e., “the work done to manufacture a teaching object out of an object of knowledge,” (Chevallard, 1985, p. 39), and on the other hand, for studying practical research and training methods for teachers, based on observation and on the study of teaching practices. This paper describes a case study in which several filmed lessons of a primary school teacher have been analysed by the author using a model to study didactic transposition that was developed following an advanced theoretical study. By then combining the video films with interviews between the researcher and teacher, the results of lesson analysis were provided to the teacher in order to raise his awareness of some of the characteristic aspects of the way in he performed the didactic transposition for the subject of history. The training aim is followed by a research aim, i.e., “assessment” by the researcher of the training or educational route achieved by the teacher. This assessment is the linchpin of this paper.

INTRODUCTION

This paper begins with an advanced theoretical study on the concept of didactic transposition, i.e., the job of transforming a body of knowledge, adapting it for a public that is not particularly expert. Following this advance study, a model was created to decode and boost understanding of didactic transposition. The model served as a framework with which to study video recordings of some lessons taught by

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primary school teachers, in order to add to their professional skills. This aim for professional expertise has been pursued by using entretiens de co-explicitation (ECE), i.e., interviews in which the researcher and teacher work together to conceptualize the actions, with objective indications as a starting point - in this case, video films (Vinatier, 2009, 2010; Altet, 2012, p. 305). The training objective is followed by a research aim: assessment of training by the researcher.

The development of the research is as follows.

Background: after providing an outline of the concept of didactic transposition\(^1\), the model used to examine the constructed didactic transposition is set out, considering the aspects of the transposition process most often repeated in the theories of the authors being examined. As will be seen, this model features four perspectives or logics, each one reified by indicators. The following section explains the concepts for analysing practices and entretien de co-explicitation, highlighting the role that video filming can have for teacher training purposes.

The main focus of the chapter describes the author’s case study of a primary school teacher. The teacher accepted to be filmed during some of his history lessons; the aim of the recordings was to study the didactic transposition process conducted by the teacher. The study was performed based on the concept of didactic device (Rossi & Toppano, 2009; Damiano, 2013) and the abovementioned model. Once the lessons had been studied by the researcher, a report was submitted to the teacher during one of the co-clarifying interviews (ECE). This was for two reasons. On one hand, because educational practice is more than the teacher’s way of doing things; it is also about “the procedures for doing them” (Altet 2003, 2012), including skills and knowledge, but also aims, purposes and choices (Altet, 2012), and therefore, studying these practices for the purposes of de-codifying the transposition process could not be limited to applying the model and researcher’s interpretation, dialogue with the teacher was needed to make it as complete and objective as possible. And on the other hand, to promote the teacher’s professional expertise by raising awareness of the some of the aspects of his/her way of transposing the specific subject.

If the training aim was pursued through reading and study – by the teacher – of the transcripts from co-clarifying interviews, then the research aim, i.e., training assessment, was pursued through the researcher’s analysis of the teacher’s interpretation.

The aim of this research is therefore to focus on the way in which training through video films and co-clarifying interviews can lead to a real raising of the individual’s awareness of different aspects of his/her teaching methods.

**BACKGROUND**

**Didactic Transposition**

The term didactic transposition was coined by Y. Chevallard in the mid-80s, and it is used to refer to the work of restructuring “intelligent knowledge”, the knowledge produced by scientific communities for the purpose of adapting it to a public of non-experts, thereby turning it into taught and then learned knowledge. The subject of didactic transposition has been discussed from different perspectives by various authors. For a study of the authors and the perspectives forming the basis of the concept, please see Rossi, P.G., and Pezzimenti, L. (2012). Since the ongoing transposition process coincides with the activity of mediation or mediated action, as discussed by Elio Damiano in his latest work (2013); please refer to this for more information on the concept.