Chapter 10
From Analogical to Analytical Thinking and Back:
The Adaptation of Teachers’ Reasoning to Complex Situations

Sébastien Pesce
University of Orléans, France

ABSTRACT

This chapter shows the importance for teachers to enter into a truly reflexive activity and to make it the main aspect of their professional activity. The author describes ways teachers can regain control over the activity of thinking and adapt their modes of reasoning to educational situations by developing control over the transition from system 1 to system 2. The aim is to consider the conditions for developing decision-making procedures, both reflexive and collective, when faced with complex situations (particularly crises), based on a deliberation rooted in a logic of inquiry.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-1811-3.ch010
INTRODUCTION

Teachers, teacher trainers, public policy makers and to a certain extent academics agree on the following: in the past few decades, or even years, the world has radically changed and so have the children and adolescents in the care of schools. Social networks, globalization, and increased access to information have radically transformed students. The educational system is facing new challenges, and we can no longer teach today as we used to. We have to think in a different way.

This thesis is as simplistic as it is attractive. Have the students changed radically? No. The means of communication they use and the information they can access may have changed, but students still have two arms and two legs, and more deeply, they are still human subjects whose identity, interactions, and the way that they relate to others and the world are organized according to the same anthropological invariants that prevailed 10, 20, 100, 1000 years ago. What has changed is that education practitioners understand these invariants less and are increasingly less familiar with them and less able to think about and with them.

Can we no longer teach today as we used to? This depends on who the “we” refers to. If we are talking about teachers who practice the so-called “traditional” teaching methods, it is certainly not possible for them to continue to teach in this way. However, that does not mean that this traditional way was relevant yesterday. The frontal, magistral methods are iniquitous as much today as yesterday, but this may be more obvious today than yesterday. As for pedagogues in the strong sense, these transformations (in the world, the resources in terms of information, the means of communication) simplify their work. More than ever, they can implement teaching methods that alternative pedagogies invented decades ago. Yesterday, they did not deliver knowledge from their podium, and they invited students to seek it out in the world. For them, social networks and new means of communication are a godsend.

Do we have to think in a different way? We just have to think, quite simply. That’s where the problem lies, at least in France. Teaching is wrongly considered as a technical, practical trade. We do not know if the profession has become less intellectual, but we make that assumption. Today, the profession is described as determined by the implementation of purely technical gestures. The mass of teachers is not very educated and reads little. The training is practical. When theories are mobilized, they are mobilized too quickly, to simply justify recommended actions (best practices) according to an applicationist logic. In French pre-service training, “reflexivity” takes the form of the production of a research paper and practice analyses. However, most of the time, these strategies are mobilized in ways that reinforce the thoughtlessness that is characteristic of the teaching world.
Dual Models Argumentative Theory and Moral Reasoning
www.igi-global.com/chapter/dual-models-argumentative-theory-and-moral-reasoning/240019?camid=4v1a