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Invitation to didactique. Reprint of the 2007 original.

SpringerBriefs in Education 30. Tokyo: Springer (ISBN 978-1-4614-8198-0/pbk; 978-1-4614-8199-7/ebook). xv, 74 p. (2014).

This important and useful book describes in detail the work of Guy Brousseau, who developed the field of didactique, which he defined as “... a more global problématique including a reflection on the purpose of teaching, on the nature of goal-knowledge, on the methods of acquisition specific to the people who are being taught, on the objectives, on the particular theoretical and practical conditions of the pedagogical activities in the teaching of the discipline. If there is to be a scientific didactique, it is necessary that it permits the deduction of the methodological measures best adapted for provoking acquisitions of knowledge from a scientific knowledge of the process of formation of the intellect (furnished in part by psychology, epistemology, biology, genetic epistemology, mathematics, linguistics, etc.). Thus it must be declared that the field of didactique includes all the specific combinations of knowledge – even knowledge in other domains – which make possible the resolution of the didactician’s problem: how to lead the student to acquire some particular notion. The author discusses the history of didactique but most of the book is devoted to careful presentations of several “situations”, including detailed student dialogues. Situations are the foundation of didactique and are subtly different from activities. “The teacher must find a situation in which to place the student. The situation must not be one in which the answer to the question posed is immediately apparent (in which case little or nothing is being learned) or in which it is so obscure that the student is defeated and won’t undertake the search. The student needs to be able to produce some solution using prior knowledge and then to see the need to modify it, and be motivated to keep on modifying it until he arrives at a successful solution. The more it needs modifying, the more engaging the situation needs to be to keep the student from giving up. In other words, the teacher’s work is to propose to the student a learning situation such that the student produces the piece of knowledge that is to be learned as his own personal answer, and uses it or modifies it to satisfy the constraints of the milieu, and not the expectation of the teacher. The teacher’s intentions and expectations can never become completely invisible, but the greater the extent to which the student can forget them, the more the learning becomes the student’s own. The author has created a mostly English language website <http://faculty.washington.edu/warfield/containing> a wealth of materials relating to Brousseau’s work. *Steven C. Althoen (Dexter)*

Classification: D20 C70 D50 D80 A30

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