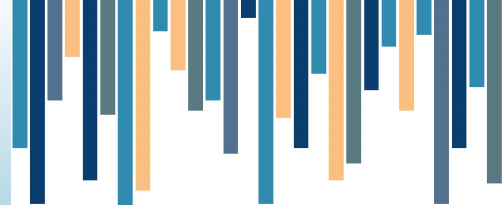


# Education in critical thinking: a pragmatic approach centered on the culture of information

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SUMMER SCHOOL

RESEARCH ON  
/DIGITAL  
/MEDIA  
/INFORMATION  
LITERACY

Literacies to revamp, repair, rekindle our world  
September 6-9, 2022 UCLouvain, Belgium

UCLouvain **GReMS**  
Groupe de Recherche en Médiation des Savoirs

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR MEDIA EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

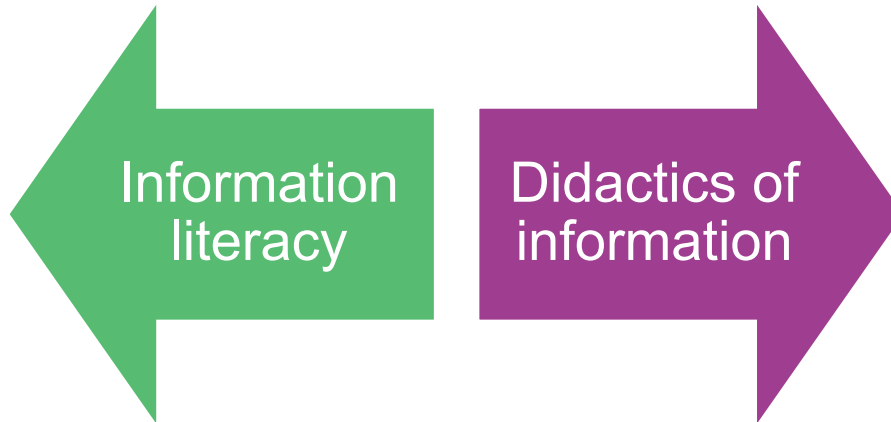


# Plan

1. Situating critical thinking in information culture: a pragmatic approach
2. Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology
3. A critical and political reflection on the perspectives for education: questions for research

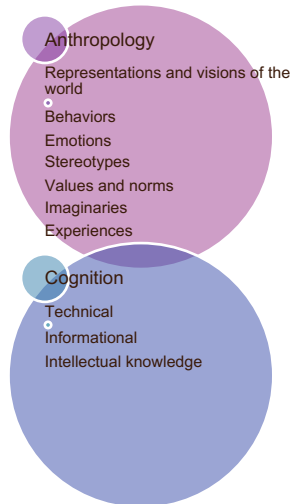
# Situating critical thinking in information culture: a pragmatic approach

Information culture: a French specificity ?



# 1 Situating critical thinking in information culture: a pragmatic approach

## Information culture: a French specificity ?

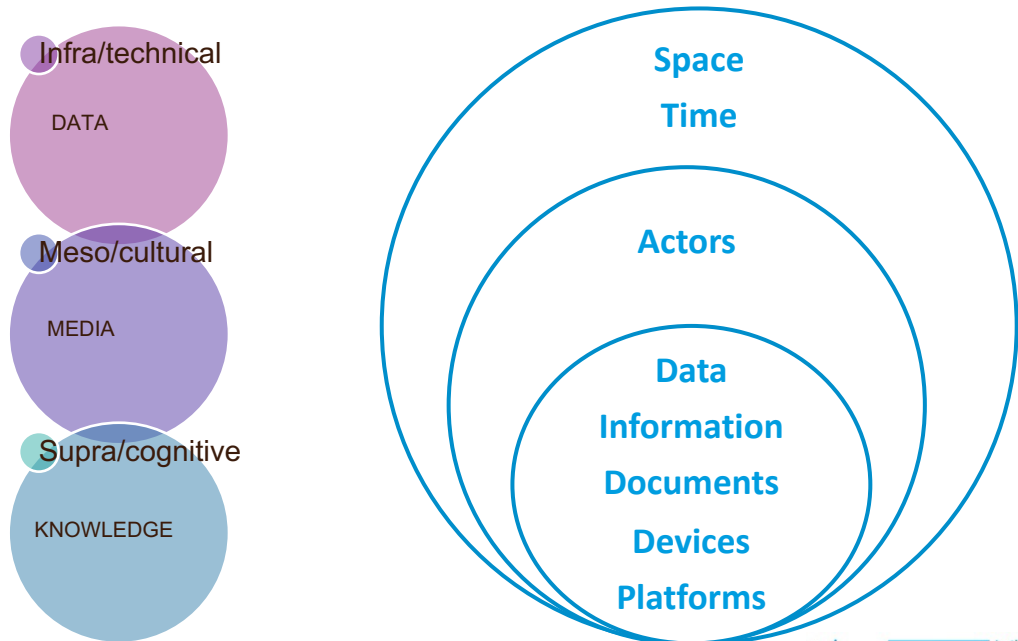


Being in the informational world

Possessing knowledge on information

# Situating critical thinking in information culture: a pragmatic approach

## Information culture: a French specificity ?



# Situating critical thinking in information culture: a pragmatic approach

## Critical thinking as a horizon of expectation

- A threatening context
- Individual responsibility
- A « regime of truth »
- A political issue

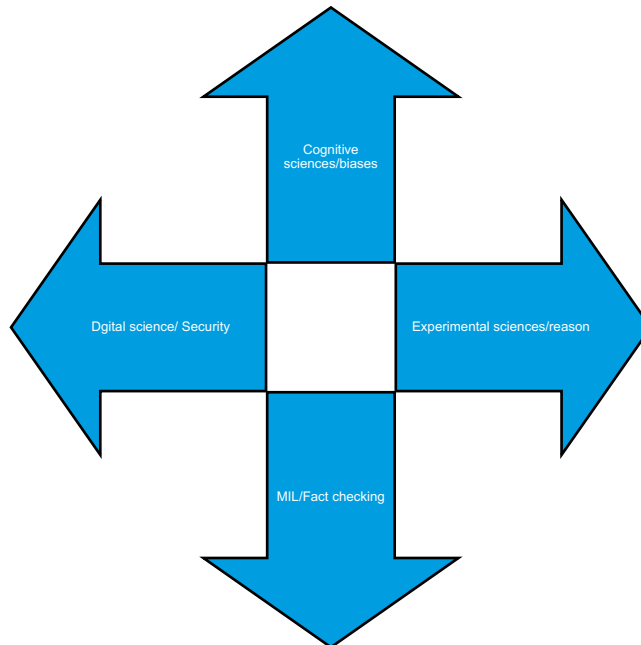
*Chaque société a son régime de vérité, sa « politique générale » de la vérité : c'est-à-dire les types de discours qu'elle accueille et fait fonctionner comme vrais ; les mécanismes et les instances qui permettent de distinguer les énoncés vrais ou faux, la manière dont on sanctionne les uns et les autres ; les techniques et les procédures qui sont valorisées pour l'obtention de la vérité ; le statut de ceux qui ont la charge de dire ce qui fonctionne comme vrai.*

*Michel Foucault, Dits et écrits II 1976-1988*

## Critical thinking as « the art of not being so governed »

## 2 Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

### A problem of complexity vs normative discourses



Learning to  
trust  
information

# Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

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## A problem of complexity vs normative discourses

- Real experiences and authentic investigating situations
- Social situations
- Metacognition and attention
- Communication: recognizing the Other

# Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

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## A problem of complexity vs normative discourses: working on *trials*

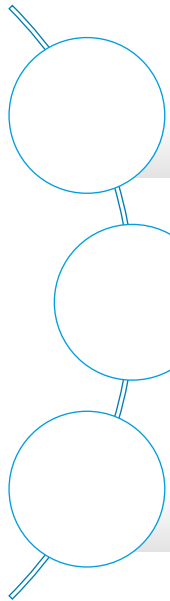
- Exploration of a topic
- Search for sources
- Finding and understanding the arguments
- Debate
- Synthesis in a **cartography of controversies**

From a value based judgement to the value of judgement

# Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

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## A qualitative methodology



Discourse analysis / semio-pragmatism

Observation in situation / ethnography

Comprehension / semi-structured interviews

# Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

## A qualitative methodology



# Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

## A qualitative methodology

- Collège (Middle school) de Port Sainte-Marie
- 25 pupils (14 years old)
- A team of teachers, 2 especially involved and worried about the pupils impossibility to express personal points of view
- Heterogenous information practices
- Teachers/researchers team
- CLEMI
- Media : Far Ouest



REVUE  
**FAR OUEST**  
Raconter, Comprendre.

## A qualitative methodology

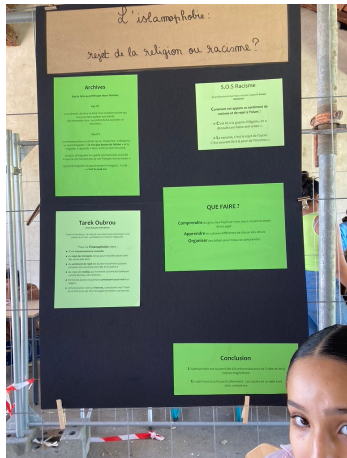
- 
- A photograph showing three students sitting at a wooden table in a classroom. They are all wearing face masks. The student on the left is a girl with long brown hair, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a black face mask, writing on a white sheet of paper with a red circular diagram. The student in the middle is a girl with long dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a blue face mask, looking down at her work. The student on the right is a girl with long brown hair, wearing a pink and white patterned sweater and a pink face mask, looking towards the other students. On the table are various supplies including glue sticks, a blue container, and several sheets of paper. The background shows a classroom setting with a bulletin board covered in papers and a blue wall.



# Investigating critical thinking in a school context: a comprehensive methodology

## A qualitative methodology

- Public presentation of the issue (poster session)
- Long article



| Hypothèses                                                                   | Items                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Démarche de projet                                                           | Représentation des objectifs du projet, des tâches, de l'utilité et de la valeur du projet<br>Imaginaires et projection<br>Organisation<br>Planification                                            |
| Autonomie (choix des thèmes, des méthodes, de l'organisation) et sociabilité | Perception de la compétence personnelle, de la contrôlabilité de l'activité<br>Sentiment de liberté de pensée et d'expression<br>Collaboration<br>Besoin d'aide<br>Auto-contrôle et auto-régulation |
| Démarche d'enquête                                                           | Capacité à identifier un besoin d'information<br>Démarche de recherche et évaluation de l'information                                                                                               |
| Motivation                                                                   | Attention<br>Engagement (passif, actif, constructif, interactif (Chi-Wylie))<br>Persévérance (perception de la temporalité)                                                                         |
| Débat                                                                        | Perception du débat et de son rôle<br>Construction d'une argumentation, de critères de sélection des arguments                                                                                      |
| Évaluation de l'information                                                  | Perception et mobilisation des critères                                                                                                                                                             |
| Environnement social                                                         | Rôle de la famille, des amis<br>Apprentissages extra-scolaires                                                                                                                                      |

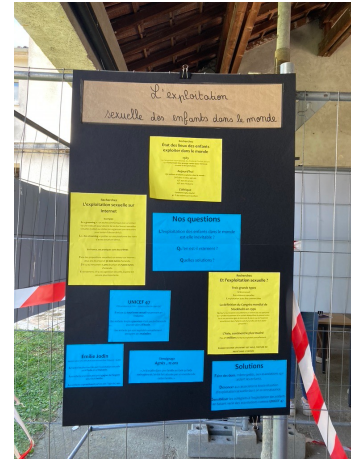
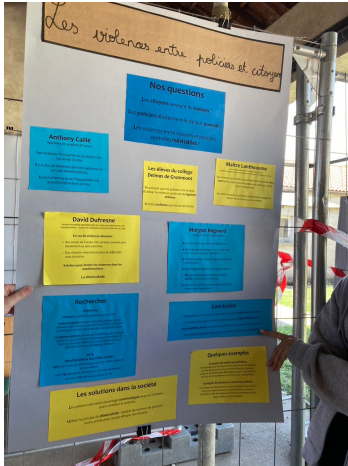
# Grille d'observation

|                    |                             |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Situation observée | Environnement physique      | Espace<br>Matériel                                                                                                                                    |
|                    | Acteurs                     | Elèves<br>Enseignants<br>Médiateurs                                                                                                                   |
| Activité observée  | Démarrage                   | Consignes, réactions                                                                                                                                  |
|                    | Organisation de l'activité  | Déplacements<br>Répartition des tâches<br>Outils mobilisés<br>Documentarisation<br>Attribution de compétences<br>Engagement<br>Climat<br>Interactions |
|                    | Organisation des recherches | Emergence des questions<br>Déclenchement, évaluation,<br>restitution                                                                                  |
|                    | Organisation des débats     | Climat, prises de parole,<br>écoute                                                                                                                   |
|                    | Production                  | Attendus, investissements,<br>création, répartition des<br>activités                                                                                  |
|                    | Persévérance                | Prolongement des<br>interactions, projection                                                                                                          |



# 3 A critical and political reflection on the perspectives for education

## First results



# Project approach

*We are in groups of three or four or two, and each group has a subject. We all have different subjects, and we had to research the subjects on which we have questions that we ask ourselves and we are going to have to do research to answer the questions and to interview people and find several ways to answer the questions.*

*We are talking about different events. For example the last time, we talked about the police, what they have the right to, what they don't have the right to. Then we try to find answers to these questions that we ask ourselves. We make assumptions.*

*The atmosphere. For example, in French class, we don't have the same atmosphere as in the project. Because in the project, we are already in groups, and we speak with people, we speak with them to express ourselves, whereas in French, if we speak, it is to answer a question, whereas in the project, we talk to express our opinion.*

# Autonomy

*We had to take our subjects and find ways to answer those questions. To answer your questions, we had to find ways, for example calling people, asking on the street, looking in a book, on the Internet...*

*In the project, we have more freedom to criticize something. For example, if we say something that would be shocking elsewhere, there in the project we are used to saying things like that. So it's no longer shocking, we all talk about it, we all give an argument whether we agree or disagree.*

*They give us the instructions, and then we debate. They told us that they were just there to supervise the course in case it got out of hand and to give us instructions. Otherwise, we do everything.*

*We can say what we think, we can say everything in fact. There is no limit. Finally there are some limits, but it's not as if we were in a normal course, French or history.*

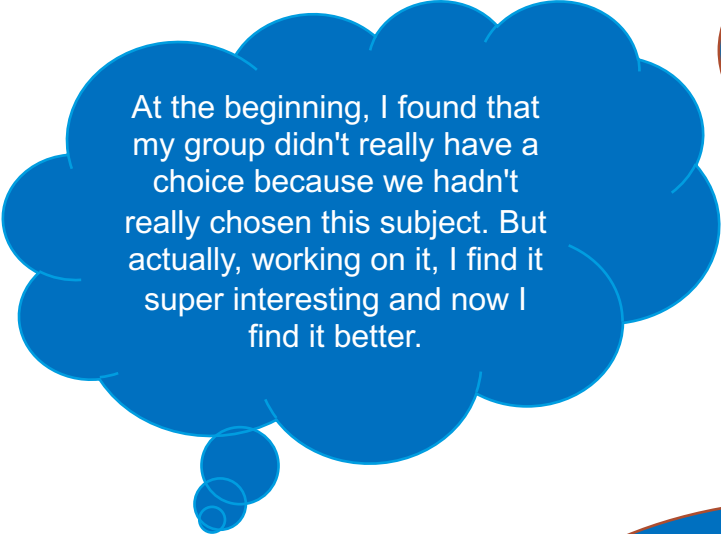
# Investigative approach

*We are the ones responsible for investigating, but we know that if we need help, adults are there.*

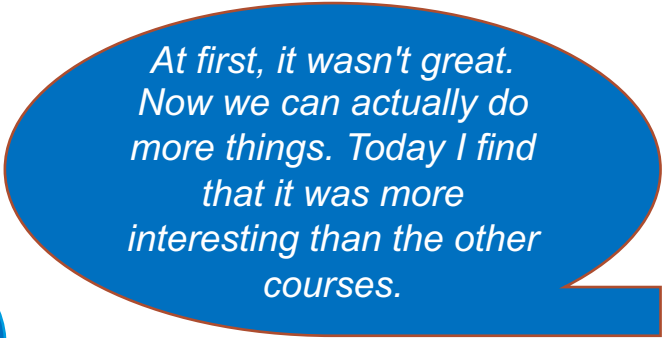
*Depending on the project, we will want to seek and find, a bit like journalists, the answers to our questions.*

*I think we can still give our opinion, but the journalist this morning told us that the article we had to do was not to give our opinion, it was more to tell the truth. But after in the hours of the project, not to mention the article, we can give our opinion.*

# Motivation



At the beginning, I found that my group didn't really have a choice because we hadn't really chosen this subject. But actually, working on it, I find it super interesting and now I find it better.



*At first, it wasn't great. Now we can actually do more things. Today I find that it was more interesting than the other courses.*



*And then I'm not comfortable when it comes to expressing my opinion because I'm afraid of the reaction of others, I don't like*

# Learning to debate

*Do not be in excess. That is to say that we can give our opinion, but not judge.*

*I didn't think that there were subjects on which we could debate so much. There were subjects on which we started from nothing, and in fact we arrived at a huge thing. For example the death penalty,*

*Above all, we can give our opinion without being judged by others.*

*In fact, it allows you to see people from another angle. It allows us to understand each other better, to live together.*

*At the beginning, we were told that we were going to choose several themes and that we were going to give our opinions on them and to criticize a little. Discuss, criticize, speak your mind and seek the opinion of others. Besides, we debated a lot.*

# Information practices

*In fact, I think that if it's true, if we go to search on other sites, it will come back, whereas if it's false, it will only be on this site. So you have to look at that.*

*For example, when I have homework to do, my father is very good at history, so I ask him. Either he answers the questions, or I go on YouTube, I watch a ten-minute video, Information comes very quickly. It's unaccompanied stuff that's easy to understand.*

*If there is something serious, we will know in any case. We don't really seek information, it's information that comes to us naturally.*

*I subscribe to stars and not news stuff. My father reads a lot of newspapers because he's a bit old, and when I talk to him he doesn't impose his point of view on me, we exchange information. There is also the radio on, with people talking like on a TV set. Information comes naturally.*

# Social environment

*(In the family) We debate on the subject of the project, but without saying that it is the project. In fact, it happens on its own.*

*Me in fact, as my sister is faster than me, she watches and she tells me, or sometimes, it's me who watches on my phone because we never watch TV. And afterwards, otherwise it's my friends who come to tell me about things.*

*(In the classroom) We're all talking together now*

*(The parents) Me, they don't give a damn. It's none of their business.*

# 3 A critical and political reflection on the perspectives for education

## Limits

- Need a long term experience
- Need comparison in several contexts
- A strong commitment for the teachers
- Adaptation for the journalist



# 3 A critical and political reflection on the perspectives for education

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## Perspectives

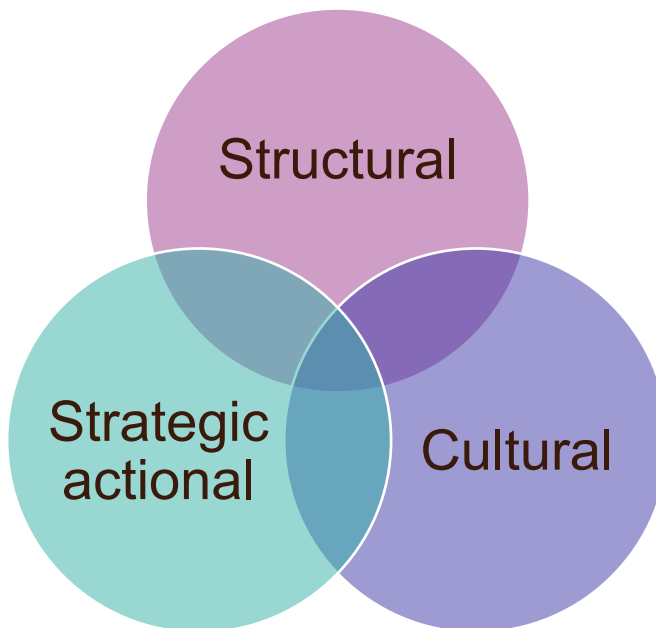
- Deconstructing controversies to construct critical thinking
- Accepting complexity
- Accepting emotion and imagination in communication



## Questions

- Collective project vs personal performance
- Real practices and representations vs technicized, normative, artificial description of the information search process and media reception
- Diversity and circulation of information production

## Questions



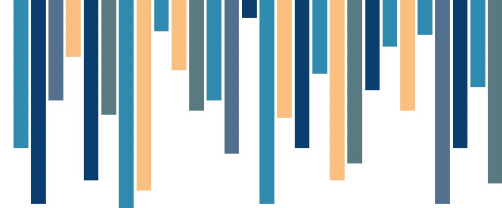
# In conclusion...

- A pragmatic and critical perspective on « the art of not being so governed »
- Activity-based educational strategies
- A necessary epistemic and political requirement





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