BENTO SELAU
RAFAEL FONSECA DE CASTRO
ORGANIZERS

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL APPROACH

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

ALEXEY CHERNISH | ALYONA IVANOVA
ANDRÉS SANTAMARÍA | CHARLES CHIKUNDA
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ediPUCRS

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Pontifícia Universidade Católica
do Rio Grande do Sul

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SUMÁRIO

PREFACE

The historian and the geologist reconstruct the facts (which already do not exist) indirectly, and nevertheless in the end they study the facts that have been, not the traces or documents that remained and were preserved. Similarly, the psychologist is often in the position of the historian and the geologist. Then he acts like a detective who brings to light a crime he never witnessed.

(Vygotsky, 1926)

My first readings of Lev Semionovich Vygotsky started in the early 1990s. I was introduced to a world of new ideas that at first seemed strange, because of the considerable complexity of his ideas and because my undergraduate education was marked by Piaget.

More than twenty years later, the peculiarity remains as I continue reading and researching for the hue of Cultural Historical Theory. I state this constant perplexity by everyday reconceptualization of the ideas of Vygotsky and his followers.

When I talk about reconceptualization I refer to the various updates (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991; Blanck and Van der Veer, 1998) and replacements of relevant concepts (Duarte, 1996, 2001; Prestes, 2010) without the intention of bringing here the differences between these theorists, but in order to observe them as constituents of hereditary dialectic and deep regards to his writing. Moreover, I echo the words of Blanck (1998) when he states that Vygotsky was more of a "talker" than a "writer", because he would have an enviable rhetorical ability, and writing his ideas was task for other researchers in his group (Blanck, 1984). This fact adds more difficulty to the understanding of his thoughts, because it is certainly overlapped by curiosity and newness.

Then what rouses us and brings the *Cultural-Historical Approach work: Educational research in different contexts*, organized by Bento Selau and Rafael Fonseca de Castro? Precisely what, in my view, enlightens and enhances Cultural-Historical Theory: its provocative and innovative aspects. Thus, prefacing this book allowed me to find eleven chapters of several researchers in their geographic origins as aforementioned in the presentation, which approach the accuracy and relevance of their investigation, confirming the epistemological status of the Cultural-Historical Theory. The texts allow readers to transit through investigations which seek to (re)visit conceptual theoretical aspects already known, such as Activity Theory, expanded with the designation Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Based on the same ideas, other chapters of this book emphasize the investigation of the development of several performers: children in early

childhood education, youth who attend a community association, high school students, teachers in initial training, blind people, E-learning students, in-service teachers, school management process. So, I describe them briefly with the intent to arouse the interest of its innovative character.

The first text entitled *Critical reflection on the reception of Vygotsky's Theory in the international academic communities*, by Manolis Dafermos, who allows critical reflections on several general trends in the reception and interpretation of Vygotsky's theory in international academic communities. After discussing the existence of different definitions of Vygotsky's theory; it examines three theoretical frameworks of generalized interpretation of Vygotsky's theory: cognitivism, culturalism and the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, and finally, discusses the challenges related to the "file revolution" in studies of Vygotsky, the author recommends that future research should focus on the development of theory and methodology of Vygotsky in the 21st century and rethink the theory of the Cultural-Historical Theory from the perspective of practical problems of Social and Educational Psychology worldwide.

Afterwards, the second chapter, entitled: *The paradoxes of an autonomous student. Forms of appropriation of an educational experience in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area High Schools*, written by Ricardo Jorge Baquero Paola and Julia Lucas, seeking innovation through the inclusion of the voices of students in the learning process, with alterations in shapes of participation and ownership of the school experience at the secondary level. The research was focused on the implementation of the "Project Our School Asks Your Opinion" (POSAYO). The project POSAYO aimed to promote the possibility that students take a stand as producers of knowledge about their own realities and interests, based on the proposals of research themes arising from students to their teachers. The results arising from the school experience allowed the assumption of different positions and movements in relation to commonly undertaken or expected positions.

Surfacing Contradictions Around Gender Responsive Curriculum Practices In Science Teacher Education In Zimbabwe, the third chapter of this book, by Charles Chikunda, who opens a discussion on the tensions and contradictions around issues of gender in Science, Mathematics and Technology (SMTS) in a context of teacher training in Zimbabwe. It uses as reference the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) second[1] and third generations, to explore gender sensitive pedagogy in teacher training, as well as to develop expansive learning for the same goal. The author concludes that gender sensitive pedagogy issues in Science, Mathematics and Technology in Zimbabwe (SMTS)

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[1]   (Engeström, 1999)

continues to be an illusion, despite numerous efforts at political level to correct the situation. Contradictions brought to light in this study are some of the reasons why the policy is not being translated into academic practice. SMTS teachers are trained without being exposed to an adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and standards for gender sensitive pedagogy issues.

In The fourth chapter, under the title *Contradictions in the Activity of Learning to Teach English in Chile*, by Malba Barahona, reports a case study that examined the contradictions that emerged around the activity of learning to teach EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in a SLTE (*Second Language Teacher Education*) program in Chile. This study followed a CHAT framework, the teacher learning was understood as a localized activity. This implied the need to consider the specific context of learning in a specific teacher training program and, mainly, in two settings: in schools where there were practicums assumed and in the university. In conclusion, this study demonstrated the power of CHAT as an explanatory tool in individual recognition, social and contextual factors that shape the nature of teacher learning and pedagogical practices. Thus, the Activity Theory helped to shed light on the dialectical nature of teacher learning and its contradictory dynamics between national policies on education, the training programs for teachers, between theory and practice, and between the views of pre-service teachers and the reality of the classroom.

In the research that composes the fifth chapter of this book, called *Formal Schooling and Self Construction: a Historical-Cultural Narrative Approach*, whose authors are Manuel L. de la Mata Benítez, Andrés Santamaría Santigosa and Mercedes Pérez Cubero), present a cultural-historical approach to the relationship between formal education, conceived as a sociocultural activity (Leontiev, 1981, Wertsch, 1985), and the *self*. Thus, they include a first attempt to make sense of the data in the study by integrating ideas of Olson (1994, 1997) Greenfield (2009, Greenfield, Keller, Foligni and Maynard, 2003) and the notion of "cultural paths for development" with other concepts of cultural-historical tradition. More recently, researches in cross-cultural psychology have shown differences in the conception of the *self* (self-image), which is characteristic of different cultures. In this sense, Markus and Kitayama (1991) distinguished between independent and interdependent self-image. They preliminarily conclude that the school is an activity environment associated with autonomous dimensions of self-image and, from a more theoretical perspective, the notion of the self as situated in dependent context (i.e., the activity). However, more studies are needed to deepen the relative character of the self-image and how the activities involved in formal education can promote the emergence of a specific model of individuality.

Constructing Transitory Activity System in Play-World Environment, the sixth chapter by Pentti Hakkarainen, presents a new approach to activity as a theoretical system to support learning readiness in *Play-World Environment*. The experimental work

based on this model has been conducted in Finland since 1996. The author struggled on the dilemma: *Should we begin formal education in primary education or should we give more emphasis on playful activities?* It is difficult to decide where the emphasis on the guidance document - in specific or general knowledge skills is. For several reasons presented in the text, among which a significant portion of children before the age of six are at home, out of any educational program and there are no systematic studies on the impact of education programs or lack of child development, the motivational basis of lifelong learning in preschool has not been built. At first glance, it seems that adopted children and children of imigrants are over-represented among alienated young people of employment or social benefits. The author recommends new approaches to research periods of crisis (Vygosky, 1998) and construction of motivation.

The seventh chapter named *Who You Are Is Where You Are: Urban Youth's Context-Dependent Experiences of the Important Life Aspects*, written by Svetlana Jović aimed to look at a community association of young people, recruiting young participants to explore the characteristics of an environment that particularly promoted development. The study reported some characteristics of the psychosocial environments through which an urban minority of young people live daily. Who they are and what they could become should always be considered in the contexts, environments in which they participate, where various social practices occur. Furthermore, it should consider that the context allows a better view on the extent of socio-cognitive processes that are involved, how young people are positioned in different contexts and how they interact with others. In this study it was observed that what people say and feel about themselves will change as the context changes, and how - adults, professionals, academics - can help (re)shaping these contexts so that they are better fitted to promote the positive development, especially among underprivileged youngsters.

Developing Agentive Subjects In School: A Russian Case Study of Educational Change from Below, the eighth chapter, written by Yuri Lapshin, Alyona Ivanova, Alexey Chernish searched a way to involve the school community (teachers and school management) in the process of renovating as real agents of innovative transformation of their activity. To the authors, a management issue dealt with collective activity, is related to the group's ability to develop the sharing of a common object. The results indicated that the shared object remains in the spotlight and the collective management remains strong enough while the activity is developing. Moreover, the increase in collective management is related to the renewal of the shared object of the activity. It was clear, also that the school community needs external help to begin the transformation. It has happened in school history when the new external leader with modern ideas joined the collective and involved new people, new transformational team was organized and the new goal of the school activity was shared by the team.

The ninth chapter, entitled *Psychology and Pedagogy of Blind People: a guide through different phases of Defectology by Vygotsky to study Blindness*, was written by Bento Selau who is also the organizer of this book. It presents the different theoretical and practical positioning of Vygotsky on the psychology and pedagogy of blind people exposed in their studies on defectology. It implies the presentation of a study on theoretical and conceptual approaches, of pedagogical-psychological character, founded on Volume V of The Collected Works of Vygotsky (1997a). It recommends that we need to reflect on the theoretical influences suffered by Vygotsky in the course of his scientific career and that considering only "El Niño Ciego" (Vygotsky, 1997b) as the only source to try to understand Vygotsky's thinking about blindness is a mistake, because it limits the notion of the understanding from the author about this deficiency. The text, at the same time, shows evidence of the changes in the Vygotsky's conceptions on blindness shows his deviation of reflexology and ideas arising from Adlerian psychoanalysis, additionally deepening the concepts related to blindness in his cultural-historical psychology.

Continuing, the tenth chapter, nominated *The importance of working with scientific concepts in formal education: a case study on writing in an E-learning Pedagogy course in Southern Brazil*, by Rafael Fonseca de Castro, also an organizer of this book, aimed to investigate the evolution of the writing exercise by three E-learning Pedagogy students of a university in Southern Brazil. Based on Historical-Cultural Theory, also examined the development of higher mental functions and focusing thinking concepts, since the cognitive benefits of working with concepts of Portuguese Language and textual production in formal education and its importance in Pedagogy courses. It is about an investigation based on pedagogical interventions (Damiani et al., 2014) whose characteristics are: intention of producing changes, attempt of problem resolution, the applied character, the necessity of dialog as theoretical reference and the possibility of producing knowledge. The discourse text analysis from the students answers and the analysis of their texts, throughout historic period of three years and a half, has produced the following results: students felt motivated when working with the Portuguese Language and textual production concepts; the interventions about the texts were positively received by the students and; writing problems until the end of the course could have been overcome with the appropriation of Portuguese Language basic concepts and textual production concepts; the accounts indicate, moreover, that the course has worked less about Portuguese and textual production concepts.

Finally, the eleventh chapter, by Harry Daniels, under the title *Professional learning in interagency workplaces*, examined inter-professional work to identify (i) what professionals such as social workers, psychologists, health workers, teachers, police officers, etc. need to know and do to work across professional boundaries for the well-being of children, and (ii) how their organizations were adapting in order to make this happen. The data suggests that although the relationship between their organizations

were re-configuring, professionals remained focused on what they saw as the children's needs and adjusted their ways of working. In some cases, professional practices moved to a co-configuration. The analysis provided a way of monitoring the sequential and contingent appearance of new concepts, consider allowing interaction mediated by/in an institutional context and the identification of ways in which attention and action were directed and diverted by the history of professional cultures. This type of communicative action analysis provides evidence of ways in which the institution is formed and shapes the action possibilities. In conclusion I recall the thinking of Vygotsky as an epigraph of this preface to assert that the research here organized, constitute a significant contribution to the theses of Cultural-Historical Theory illuminating and enlightening them to offer not only an update or conceptual renewal, but providing research topics in education that are not drained, they persist in causing surprise and interest. And, as Vygotsky would say in his biographedmodesty, "it was not me who made an interesting conference, but the **topic** is interesting" (Carretero, 2000).

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Fabiane Adela Tonetto Costas
(UFSM), August, 2014.

PRESENTATION

APPROACHING RESEARCH GROUPS AND DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Bento Selau
Rafael Fonseca de Castro

The interest of various researchers and scholars of *stricto sensu* postgraduate studies in the areas of education and psychology, about the Soviet Education and Psychology, has grown over the years. The theoretical conclusions drawn by different authors from this perspective (L.S. Vygotsky, A.R. Luria, A.N. Leontiev, S.L. Rubinshtein, D.B. Elkonin, P. Ya. Galperin, V.V. Davydov, for example), in those areas were elaborated on a different epoch, in particular social and historical contexts. It means that although they serve as important theoretical frameworks for the development of new investigations, the result of their research, by itself, cannot answer the questions that our current reality demands: we are undergoing a unique social and historical reality, in which people's interests and the results of their social interactions have changed and are constantly changing.

In this sense, new scientific research, based on historical-cultural approach, become every day more relevant due to their conceptual richness and its potential applicability in various fields of knowledge. Concerning this compilation, Cultural-Historical approach: educational research in different contexts, elements in response to different questions and different educational and psychological needs, applied to different contexts are presented.

This publication presents the results of researches using as a basis the Historical-Cultural Approach, derived from studies conducted in different contexts, covering 16 countries – including authors' nationality, membership of the participating universities and members of the editorial board. A group of researchers from different countries, linked to this important theoretical matrix with recognized scientific reputation was collected.

It is worth noting that, for a long time, participants in two research groups have been working together and debating the need for dissemination of scientific researches related mainly to this theoretical framework. Therefore, the creation of this book is the result of the exchange of its organizers with researchers attached to this framework and

linked to international universities: Bento Selau, leader and researcher at the "Research group of inclusive education, human movement and Vygotski's defectology" on the Federal University of Pampa, and Rafael Fonseca de Castro, a researcher at the group "Education and cultural-historical psychology", belonging to the Federal University of Pelotas, both groups linked to the "National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development" (CNPq) from Brazil, have been working for some years, with the support of the researcher Magda Damiani Floriana, with researchers Harry Daniels (University of Oxford) and Bernd Fichtner (Universität Siegen). The studies are based on historical-cultural approach and aimed at practical application in the field of Education.

Through the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, in 2012, Bento Selau, Rafael Fonseca de Castro and Harry Daniels met Charles Chikunda (Rhodes University Education Faculty), Manolis Dafermos (The University of Crete), Malba Barahona (Australian National University), Manuel de la Mata L. Benítez (Universidad de Sevilla), Yuri Lapshin (Moscow State University of Psychology and Education), Svetlana Jović (the Graduate Center, City University of New York) and Pentti Hakkarainen (emeritus professor at the University of Oulu and professor of Psychology at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences), at the III International ISCAR Summer University. These researchers were able to debate, together and deeply about the development of the researches that they were conducting, all related to the historical-cultural approach, their assumptions and their consequences. At this time, the idea of publishing the results of their researches together grew stronger. Ricardo Baquero (Universidad de Quilmes y Universidad de Buenos Aires) was invited to join this group and present the results of his research because of its valuable contribution with regard to the above mentioned theoretical matrix.

The experience afforded by this collection of articles has enabled young researchers to exchange experiences with more experienced ones, jointly publishing the results of their studies and fostering collaboration between different and recognized research groups. Still, a publication that presents research results in different countries, with specific cultural and social characteristics, at the same time takes the form of a rich opportunity to highlight the potential of this theoretical framework for practical application and the research in education.

This book was funded by the FAPERGS (Foundation For Promoting Research in Southern Brazil) and CAPES. To obtain this funding, there was a competition (to the Public Bidding FAPERGS/CAPES 06/2013) with a large number of proposals submitted to FAPERGS, in 2012, covering all major areas of knowledge.

This book also has the collaboration of an international editorial board, responsible for evaluating the articles to be published, composed of researchers/professors and PhD professors, with great involvement with the theoretical basis of this compilation framework. Each evaluator had the responsibility to read and evaluate a number of

texts and issue individual opinions. The editorial board members, and their work units and country, are:

- PhD. Adriano Henrique Nuernberg - Federal University of Santa Catarina - Brazil

- PhD. Cristina Boéssio - Federal University of Pampa - Brazil

- PhD. Georg Rückriem - The Berlin University of the Arts - Germany

- PhD. Hartmut Giest - University of Potsdam - Germany

- PhD. José Carlos Libâneo - Catholic University of Goiás - Brazil

- PhD. Lúcio Jorge Hammes - Federal University of Pampa - Brazil

- PhD. Martin Bittner - Freie Universität Berlin - Germany

- PhD. Serena Vegetti - Sapienza University of Rome - Italy

They worked according to the following guideline:

1. Each study was analyzed by two members of the editorial board, the model double-blind (well-known format that does not allow communication between referees and authors, even the knowledge of the authors of each text by members of the editorial board).

2. Only the work approved by the two evaluators were confirmed in the book publication, even with suggestions of modifications.

3. One study was considered unqualified (denied) by both referees and consequently was excluded from the publication.

It is also informed that in the course of this work, the reader will find different spellings for the surname of Soviet authors cited. We observed that different transliterations for the surname of L.S. Vygotsky were used - greatest exponent of Soviet Psychology: Vygotsky Vygotski, Vigotski - however, when organizing the papers, we do not modify the form of writing the surname of this author or others in order not to interfere in the ways of quotation and transliteration suggested by the authors.

By outlining some details regarding this publication, we quote:

Scope of the book: international → Collaborators (authors and editorial board members) are of different nationalities and act as researchers in different countries and are bound to different universities.

The book presents doctorate students → Our way of thinking about the planning of this work, and its consequent scientific dissemination, consisted in a constant

participation of *stricto sensu* students. This scenario has allowed the young researchers to disclose the results of their research and also learn the procedures that are related to publishing a work of this scope and level.

Forms of dissemination: not marketed → Following the rules of the Bid FAPERGS/ CAPES 06/2013, the book cannot be sold, being available for free in various universities, research groups, schools and other educational institutions libraries.

Formats: Printed and *online* → the book was released in printed format, but it is also available in the *online* platform at Federal University of Pampa. The *online* document provides easy reading mode for blind people.

Countries involved in the book (authors and Editorial Board) → South Africa/ Zimbabwe, Argentina, Brazil, Chile/Australia, Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, United Kingdom, Russia/Finland, Serbia/United States of America.

Finally, we wish *Cultural-historical approach: educational research in different contexts* can contribute to the current debate about research in education and psychology as further studies are warranted to dialogue with the current context.

Bento Selau and Rafael Fonseca de Castro
Jaguarão / Pelotas, January, 2015.

CHAPTER 1

CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE RECEPTION OF VYGOTSKY'S THEORY IN THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES

Manolis Dafermos

Introduction

Lev Vygotsky founded an original theory commonly known as cultural historical psychology at the end of the 1920s and 30s in the USSR. At that time Vygotsky's works did not have a high impact on the international scene of psychology and other disciplines.

Vygotsky's 'second life' in the 'western world' began from the early 1960s, when Vygotsky's book *Miclenie I rech* (*Thinking and speech)* was published under the title *Thought and language* (1962) with Jerome Bruner's introduction. It is worth noting that the Russian edition of Vygotsky's book *Miclenie I rech* in 1956 modified the Russian edition of 1934 without further explanation. The 1962 MIT Press translation of Vygotsky's work *Miclenie I rech* became the source of translations in other countries such as Argentina (1964), Italy (1966), Brazil (1987), etc. The Russian version of 1956 was translated into various languages such as Japanese (1962), German (1964), Polish (1971), etc. For many years a limited and problematic version of Vygotsky's book *Miclenie I rech* has circulated in different countries (Lima, 1995b).

After publication of the book *Mind in society* (1978) under Vygotsky's name the 'Vygotsky boom' started. American philosopher Stephen Toulmin referred to Vygotsky as the 'Mozart of Psychology' (Toulmin, 1978). The book *Mind in society* is not written by Vygotsky. *Mind in society* is "a compilation and juxtaposition of fragments taken from different Vygotsky works written during different periods of his scientific career" (Yasnitsky, 2010, p. 4).

A bibliography of Vygotsky's works, which was prepared by Lifanova (1996), includes 275 titles. But the majority of researchers used only two of Vygotsky's books: *Thought and language,* and *Mind in society.*

Large literature on Vygotsky's legacy and many different applications of his ideas in different disciplines have emerged. Multiple interpretations about the theoretical

background and possible applications of Vygotsky's theory have developed. Many educators and psychologists extol the benefits of Vygotsky's theory, but actually they know little about his works. Many researchers accept only a few fragmented ideas, taken out of the specific context within which these ideas have developed.

According to Daniels, Cole and Wertsch (2007), studying Vygotsky in context means that we should define two different historical eras and multiple social milieus – the context of the Soviet Union in the first half of the twentieth century and different parts of the world of the twenty-first century. In recent years in the English-speaking regions of the Western world a transformation of Vygotsky into "a 'chewing gum' for everybody, every day, and every occasion" takes place (Dafermos, & Marvakis, 2011, p. 95). The term 'westernization' of Vygotsky does not depict the complex processes of the reception and implementation of Vygotsky's theory in different parts of the globe (North America, Latin America, China, Japan, different countries of Europe such as Germany, England, Holland, Denmark, Finland, etc.). Vygotsky's masterpieces have been translated into various languages. There are several attempts at analysis of Vygotsky's theory in different sociocultural settings such as the USA (Miller, 2011), China (Hong, Yang, & Cheng, 2007), Brazil (Lima, 1995a), Latin America (González Rey, & Mitjans Martínez, 2013), etc. However, the analysis and multiple applications of Vygotsky's theory across countries and the geopolitical regions remains open-ended question.

Debates across different 'camps' or schools over Vygotsky's legacy have been carried out in various international Vygotskian academic communities. In the context of a dialogue of different Vygotskian 'camps' many questions about dialectics, relativism, developmentalism, Marxism, etc. have been raised (Toomela, 2008; Allakhverdov & Ivanov, 2008; Matusov, 2008; Elhammoumi, 2009; Veresov, 2005). What should be the criteria of choice between different readings and versions of Vygotskian theory? Are the positions of these versions or 'camps' compatible or incompatible?

Firstly, it is important to note a paradox of the interpretation of Vygotsky's theory.

Radically opposite readings of Vygotsky's texts and different interpretations of Vygotsky's legacy have emerged. Papadopoulos (1996) attempted to analyze the reception of Vygotsky's theory in academic psychology. He discussed two typical cases of Vygotsky's reception, one cognitive and other cultural. He concluded that Vygotsky's ideas have been incorporated in paradigmatically different theories.

However, it would be incorrect to limit Vygotsky's ideas only to psychology, because his ideas provide a broad framework which has been expanded in various disciplines such as pedagogy, linguistics, anthropology, etc. (Lima, 1995a). Daniels (1993, xvi) argues that "Vygotsky's theory can provide grounds for different, if not opposing, epistemologies and pedagogies". The idea of the existence of many 'Vygotskian' pedagogies, psychologies, and epistemologies reinforces the paradox of the reception of Vygotsky's theory in international academic communities.

The systematic investigation of the reception and implementation of Vygotsky's legacy in different parts of the globe is beyond the scope of this chapter. In the present work I will focus mainly on critical reflections on several widespread tendencies in the reception and interpretation of Vygotsky's theory in international academic communities. Three main issues will be discussed. First, I will discuss the existence of different definitions of Vygotsky's theory.

Second, I will analyze three widespread theoretical frameworks of interpretation of Vygotsky's theory: cognitivism, culturalism, cultural historical activity theory. Third, I will discuss challenges connected with the 'archival revolution' in Vygotskian studies and highlight the need for a reconsideration and deeper investigation of Vygotsky's theory.

How to define Vygotsky's theory?

How to define Vygotsky's ideas? Various designations of his own theory could be found in different Vygotsky works: 'instrumental psychology', 'conception of the historical development of the higher psychological functions' [kontseptsiia istoricheskogo razvitiia vysshikh psikhologicheskikh funktsii], 'theory of the higher psychological functions' [teoriia vysshikh psikhologicheskikh funktsii], 'the cultural–historical theory of the development of higher psychic functions', etc. (Keiler, 2012, p.21; Veresov, 1999, p.27).

Various designations have been used by the next generation of Soviet psychologists: 'cultural-historical theory of the psyche' [kulturno-istoricheskoi teoriei psikhiki] (Leontiev & Luria 1956, p. 7), 'theory of the development of the higher psychical functions' [teoriia razvitiia vysshikh psikhicheskikh funktsii] (Leontiev, Luria, & Teplov, 1960, p.3), 'cultural-historical theory of the higher psychical functions' [kulturno-istoricheskaja theoria vysshikh psikhicheskikh funktsii] (Brushlinskii, 1968).

According to Keiler (2012), the label 'cultural-historical theory' [kulturnogo-istoricheskaia teoriia] is no authentic designation for the conceptions elaborated by L.S. Vygotsky, but has "been introduced in the mid-1930s by adversaries of Vygotsky... with the defamatory purpose, to impute to the 'Vygotsky-Luria-group'" (Keiler, 2012, p.22).

D. Elkonin defines Vygotsky's theory as 'non classical psychology' which is presented as "the science of the way the subjective world of a single person emerges from the objective world of art, the world of production tools, the world of the entire industry" (Elkonin, 1989, p. 478).

Vygotsky's theory has been defined also as 'height psychology' (or 'peak psychology') (Yaroshevsky, & Gurgenidze, 1997, p.351; Robbins, 1999, p.v) which emphasized the potential for development through social collaboration.

Contemporary researchers use the notions 'sociocultural theory'. Wertsch states that "I use the term sociocultural because I want to understand how mental action

is situated in cultural, historical, and institutional settings. I have chosen this term rather than others (such as cultural or sociohistorical) in order to recognize the important contributions of several disciplines and schools of thought to the study of mediated action. On the one hand, I wish to recognize the contributions made by Vygotsky and his colleagues (although they typically used the term 'sociohistorical' rather than sociocultural). On the other, I wish to recognize the contributions made by many contemporary scholars of culture (although most of the scholars I have in mind do not use the term historical in descriptions of what they do). In a sense, a term such as sociohistorical-cultural would be more accurate, but it is obviously much too cumbersome" (Wertsch, 1991, p. 15-16).

Vygotsky has never used the term 'sociocultural' for codification (or labeling) of his own theory. The term 'sociocultural' does not refer to the theory founded by Vygotsky and his colleagues, but the theoretical framework of its reception and incorporation in North American settings. Vygotsky's theory was only one of many thinkers who have inspired the founders of sociocultural theory.

There are a lot of difficult questions about a link between 'sociocultural theory' and 'cultural-historical psychology' such as the question of the relationships between the historical perspective of cultural historical psychology and the concept of cultural differences of 'sociocultural theory'. Wertsch (1991, p.16) criticizes Vygotsky for "reducing cultural differences to historical differences". It is only one example of the serious differences between Vygotsky's theory and its reception and transformation by North Atlantic scholars. Robbins (2007) argues that sociocultural theory cannot deal with history as change and sometimes "turns into a model of postmodern bricolage". For Vygotsky 'history' and 'historical' were very important as it refers to the onto-genesis and phylo-genesis of the human mind. Neglect of 'historical' in Vygotsky's theory is an indicator of a misunderstanding of its essence.

'Cultural' and 'historical' are the two interconnecting aspects of his theory which constitute its content. The definition (or labeling) of Vygotsky's ideas is not a neutral point of view, but it depicts the understanding of the essence of his theory. Yasnitsky (2011) argues that the terminological diversity and fluidity reflect the constant search for adequate descriptors for the research programme introduced by Vygotsky and his colleagues (Yasnitsky, 2011). In my opinion, this terminological diversity and fluidity express also the existence of different ways of receiving and implementing Vygotsky's theory in various social and scientific contexts.

Edward Said (1983) argued that when a theory is moving in a new environment, it will be transformed as a result of changes in place and time. Traveling around the globe Vygotsky's theory has been essentially transformed under the influence of multiple contexts in its reception and implementation. The main problem is that frequently

researchers and practitioners are not aware of the difference between Vygotsky's theory and its own frames and filters in its reception.

The mirrors of cognitivism

The first translations of Vygotsky's works in an English language context appeared at the end of the 1920's years (Vygotsky, 1929). The reappearance of Vygotsky's ideas in western academia occurred in the early 1960's in the new social and scientific context.

As I have already mentioned, J.Bruner played a crucial role in introducing Vygotsky's theory to Western Academia. Bruner was involved in educational reform taking place in the USA under the influence and pressure of the 'Sputnik shock' of 1957. As the result of the 'Sputnik shock' "...America was made to realize that it was lagging behind the Soviet Union in preparing scientists, and also citizens who were well educated in such areas as science and math, from whom future intellectual leaders would emerge" (Takaya, 2008, p.4-5). Bruner was one of the first American thinkers who was aware of the inadequacy of the principles of the so-called experience-based education as well as behaviorist theory learning. Jean Piaget and Vygotsky were the two psychologists who helped him realize the importance of studying the development of the human mind (Takaya, 2008).

In the context of North Atlantic psychology the reception of Vygotsky's theory took place under the influence of the 'cognitive revolution' which "was intended to bring 'mind' back into the human sciences after a long cold winter of objectivism" (Bruner, 1990, p.1). The behaviorist model S-R could not moreover satisfy many researchers. The reintroduction of thinking in psychology after a long period of behaviorist domination opened up new perspectives for the development of psychology and learning theory. J.Bruner, one of the protagonists of the cognitive revolution considered the introduction of a middle link (Sign-mediated thought) between S-R as a way to overcome the behaviorist pattern (Papadopoulos, 1996).

Vygotsky provides "the foundations for the cognitive developmental theory on which Bruner builds his account of the role of education in human development" (Olson, 2001, p.106). Bruner argues that "the cognitive revolution simply absorbed the concept of learning into the broader concept of "the acquisition of knowledge" (Bruner, 1990, p.105).

Cognitivism emerged in the 1950s in North America as a reaction to the domination of behaviorism. Cognitivism is based on the assumption that cognition constitutes a "manipulation of symbols after the fashion of digital computers. In other words, cognition is mental representation: the mind is thought to operate by manipulating symbols that represent features of the world or represent the world as being a certain way" (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993, p.8). Cognition is considered by representatives of cognitivism as totally separated from the consciousness of particular subjects involved

in social interaction. "Cognitivist, on the other hand, postulates processes that are mental but that cannot be brought to consciousness at all.

Thus we are not simply unaware of the rules that govern the generation of mental images or of the rules that govern visual processing; we could not be aware of these rules" (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993, p.49). In contrast to cognitivism, for Vygotsky (1997b) consciousness is one of the most important and difficult problems of psychology. Vygotsky developed various strategies for its investigation in different periods of the development of his research program (Veresov, 1999), but for all the last years of his short life he attempted to analyze the problem of consciousness which has been ignored by cognitivist thinkers.

The growing interest in Vygotsky's theory took place under the influence of the linguistic revolution in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Already in 1950 the debate between Chomsky and behaviorists was at its peak (Newman & Holzman, 1993). Chomsky criticized mechanistic, reductionist interpretations of language which have been proposed by behaviorists who consider psychic phenomena as simple reactions to external stimuli. Vygotsky's theory of a mutual relationship between thought and speech radically differs both from Chomsky's innatist explanation of language competence and the behavioral theory of verbal behavior.

Van der Veer and Valsiner note that the creation of the figure of Vygotsky in the USA was connected with the decline of interest in Piaget's ideas in the 1970s. "Vygotsky's message - of the role of the 'social other' in child development (even if not original to him, nor very unusual among other sociogenetic thinkers) - fitted into American education contexts where Piaget ascribed individual learning freedom of pupils was threatening the authority and control functions of the teachers" (Van der Veer &Valsiner, 1994, p.4).

One of the serious barriers for understanding Vygotsky's theory in the USA is connected with the tendency to create a distance from its ideological backgrounds and the sociocultural context in which it was formed. "What is more important, however, is a more general tendency not only to avoid the connection of Vygotsky's theory to Marxism, but to avoid any contextual considerations of Vygotsky's work at all. One can see a great irony here: Cultural–historical theory tends to be interpreted and taught in a cultural and historical vacuum"(Ageyev, 2003, p.437). Decontextualization of Vygotsky's theory constitutes a kind of incorporation into a radically different theoretical and methodological 'paradigm'.

"Present-day psychologists' interest in Vygotsky's thinking is indeed paradoxical. On the one hand, his writings seem increasingly popular among developmental psychologists in Europe and North America. On the other hand, however, careful analyses and thorough understanding of the background of Vygotsky's ideas are rare...Vygotsky seems to be increasingly well-known in international psychology, while remaining little

understood. The roots of his thinking in international philosophical and psychological discourse remain largely hidden. His ideas have rarely been developed further, along either theoretical or empirical lines" (Valsiner, 1988, p. 117).

Vygotsky's theory has become popular in contemporary pedagogical literature. Vygotsky's ideas have had a great impact on educational theory and practice in different countries and geopolitical regions. It is reported that the interest in Vygotsky's theory in the USA emerged in the particular social context: "The reception of Vygotsky was also facilitated by social factors— such as American educators' growing interest in a pedagogical reform that would de-emphasize the traditional, individualist view of learning. Pedagogy and child psychology were moving away from a reliance on behaviorist models. They needed a new paradigm, and in the context of increasing liberalism (partly provoked by the Vietnam war) the Vygotskian approach seemed particularly appealing" (Hyman, 2012, p.644).

It is worth mentioning an example of the reception of cultural-historical psychology in the field of pedagogy and child psychology in the North American context. Famous in western literature is the concept of 'zone of proximal development', but this is not the central and original Vygotsky idea and in isolation from other concepts of cultural-historical psychology it could easily be misunderstood (Dafermos, 2014). Bruner used the Vygotskian concept of ZPD for the foundation of his theory of 'scaffolding'. Although Vygotsky has never used the term 'scaffolding', the terms ZPD and 'scaffolding' become synonyms in literature (McLeod, 2012). The contemporary reception of Vygotsky is "highly selective, distorted and perhaps oversimplified in its apparent coherence" (Gillen, 2000, p. 184).

In accordance with a limited, formal interpretation of cultural historical psychology ZPD is presented only as a psychological unity and not as a socio-historical unity of study (Newman, & Holzman, 1993). Many critical pedagogies in Brazil argue that the concept of zone of proximal development as presented in the Portuguese translation of the North Atlantic translation offers "a linear and partial understanding of human development" (Lima, 1995b, p.493). In the Brazilian context Vygotsky's theory is considered through the perspective of complementing and expanding the theoretical background of critical pedagogy which is presented as pedagogy of and for social transformation (Lima, 1995a).

It can be seen that Vygotsky's theory has been radically transformed in different cultural historical contexts. Totally different interpretations of the concepts of cultural historical psychology such as the concept 'zone proximal development' (mainstream and critical) can be found. The problem is that usually researchers and practitioners are not aware of their implicit assumptions of adopting Vygotsky's theory and how these assumptions are connected with their scientific, educational, political, social practices.

The mirrors of Culturalism

Cultural psychology is one of the typical patterns (modes) for the reception of Vygotsky's theory. Michael Cole, one of the major figures of cultural psychology, carried out post-doctoral research working under the guidance of Alexander Luria. Undoubtedly, Cole essentially promoted the dialogue between Soviet and American psychologists.

Using the concept of cultural artifact (including material tools and language), Cole attempted to elaborate a mediational theory of mind. "Artifacts are the fundamental constituents of culture. The growth of the human mind, in ontogeny and in human history, must properly be understood as a coevolution of human activities and artifacts" (Cole, 1996, p. xiv). Contrary to Vygotsky, who made a clear distinction between material tools, and signs as psychological tools, introducing the concept 'cultural artifact', Cole (1996) eliminated the qualitative difference between them.

Cole's cultural psychology is based more on Wartofsky's conception of artifacts (Daniels, 2008) than on Vygotskian analysis of material and psychological tools. There was no conception of artefact in Vygotsky's theory. Vygotsky rejected the "subsumption of tools and signs under the concept of 'artifact'" (Rückriem, 2009, p.100). "Phenomena that have their own psychological aspect, but in essence do not belong wholly to, psychology, such as technology, are completely illegitimately psychologized. The basis for this identification is ignoring the essence of both forms, of activity and the differences in their historical role and nature. Tools as devices of work, devices for mastering the processes of nature, and language as a device for social contact and communication, dissolve in the general concept of artefacts or artificial devices" (Vygotsky, 1997c, p.61).

In Cole's Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition at the University of California cross cultural research was carried out. Michael Cole incorporated cultural historical theory into his cross-cultural research. His cross-cultural research is based on the one hand on the tradition of American Anthropology and, on the other, on cultural historical psychology and activity theory.

Cultural relativism is one of the key concepts of cultural Anthropology. From the standpoint of cultural relativism cultures are considered as discrete units both in time and space. According to Rogoff (2003), understanding of human development from a sociocultural perspective includes the following patterns:

" – Moving beyond ethnocentrism to consider different perspectives
– Considering diverse goals of development
– Recognizing the value of the knowledge of both insiders and outsiders of specific cultural communities
– Systematically and open-mindedly revising our inevitably local understandings so that they become more encompassing" (Rogoff, 2003, p.12).

Cultural relativism is constructed as a rejection of ethnocentrism and a celebration of cultural differences. Cultural relativism is based on the fragmentation of culture and the exoticization of cultural differences. Cultural relativism emerged in cultural anthropology and expanded in other disciplines (linguistics, cultural studies, psychology, etc.).

Matusov (2008, p.85) argues that there are not only similarities, but also some important differences between Vygotsky's cultural-historical and sociocultural projects. In contrast to the sociocultural approach which emphasizes cultural diversity, the cultural-historical school ignores important differences between cultures. In my opinion, the problem is not that Vygotsky ignored the differences between different cultures. The difficulty consists rather in that the concept of culture in cultural historical psychology is totally different than in a sociocultural approach. "Therefore, any time Vygotsky uses the word *culture* or *cultural,* we have to keep in mind that he, generally, means its generic, universal connotation, not its specifics and particulars" (Ageyev, 2003, p. 441). Even in Luria's research in Uzbekistan, Luria and Vygotsky did not focus on specific characteristics of Uzbek culture, but they investigated general routes of cognitive development. Vygotsky's concept of culture differs radically from cultural diffusionism and cultural relativism.

Contemporary cultural relativism is connected with multiculturalism based on the particularism of different cultures and the celebration of cultural differences. The developmental perspective of cultural historical psychology differs totally from post-modern relativization and fragmentation of culture. The modernization of Vygotsky's theory as well as post-modern reading by relativistic oriented cultural psychology leads to a theoretical confusion and misunderstanding. Moreover, the relativistic cultural psychology rejects totally the developmental, historical orientation of cultural historical psychology as a theory of the development of higher mental functions (Veresov, 2009). *The separation of the cultural dimensions of psychological processes from the historical, developmental perspective of their consideration leads to distortion and confusion.*

The mirrors of Cultural-historical activity theory

Cultural-historical activity theory (CH/AT) has become one of the most popular theoretical frameworks of the incorporation of Vygotsky's legacy in Anglo-Saxon literature over the past three decades. According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), the introduction of Cultural Historical Activity Theory in North America is connected to the attempt by researchers and practitioners to study complex learning environments. The increasing interest in Vygotsky's ideas is closely linked to the disappointment with traditional learning theories such as behaviorism and cogntitivism. Cultural-historical activity theory is based on the compilation of various ideas of Russian schools of psychology and their adaptation within the North American context. "When activity theory was adopted in North America

most scholars, including myself, used it exclusively as a descriptive tool in qualitative studies and not as a method for changing practice" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p.31).

Different versions of Cultural-historical activity theory can be found. Engeström's theory of activity systems tends to be among the most powerful versions of CHAT (Engeström, 2001; Engeström, Miettinen & Punamaki, 1999; Engeström, Lompscher & Rückriem, 2005). Sawchuk, Duarte & Elhammoumi attempt to develop a critically-oriented version of Cultural historical activity theory on the basis of Marxist dialectics (Sawchuk, Duarte & Elhammoumi, 2006). Stetsenko & Arievitch consider Cultural-historical activity theory as a project able to explain human subjectivity and promote social transformation (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004a, 2004b).

However, there are some common orientations between different versions of Cultural historical activity theory. Contrary to approaches emphasizing differences between cultural historical psychology and activity theory, "the basic impulse underlying a CH/AT approach is to reject this either/or dichotomy" (Cole, Engeström, 2007, p.485). Focusing on similarities and underestimating the differences between cultural-historical psychology and activity theory, the representatives of CH/AT attempt to develop a framework for their combination.

Engeström's approach of three generations of Cultural-historical activity theory is based on the rejection of the dichotomy between cultural-historical psychology and activity theory and historical legitimization of Cultural-historical activity theory. The first generation refers to Vygotsky's theory of mediated action. The second generation is connected with A.N. Leontiev's theory of emphasizing the collective nature of human activity. Engeström's activity systems model is considered by him as the main achievement of the third generation of Cultural historical activity theory (Engeström, 2001).

The scheme of three generations of Cultural-historical activity theory offers a linear, continuous, presents, decontextualized account and obscures the gaps, tensions, and inconsistencies in the history of cultural-historical psychology and activity theory. From the perspective of the idea of three generations of Cultural-historical activity theory, it is hard to explain the tension between Vygotsky and Leontiev in the early 1930s.

At this point the idea of three generations of Cultural-historical activity theory coincides with the 'canonical approach' in Soviet psychology, considering activity theory as a continuation of cultural historical psychology (Radzikhovskii, 1979; Davydov & Radzikhovskii, 1985). Proponents of the 'canonical approach' argue that there is the 'school of Vygotsky-Leontiev-Luria'. The 'canonical approach' of the development of the 'school of Vygotsky-Leontiev-Luria' has been criticized for ignoring the serious differences between Vygotsky's research programme and the Kharkov group's research programme (Yasnitsky, 2011). The proponents of the second approach focus on discontinuities and gaps that exist between Vygotsky's and Leontiev's research

programs. Toomela (2000) argues that activity theory is a dead end for cultural historical psychology. Martins (2013) focuses not only on the theoretical breakout that occurred between Vygotsky and Leontiev, but also on differences between them connected with conjectural and ideological positioning, arising from political changes in the Soviet Union.

In the context of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CH/AT) both Rubinstein's version of activity theory and also Leontiev's and Rubinstein's debates on the concept 'activity' disappeared. The image of the development of the concept of activity would be simplified, if we did not take into account the differences in each of these scientific schools and debate between them (for example, the differences of Galperin's and Leontiev's positions).

Serious differences between the 'third' and previous generation of CHAT can be found. Hakkarainen (2004, p.4) argues that western CHAT accepts "a multidisciplinary approach while the Russian activity approach is more or less psychological". A multidisciplinary approach to activity theory has developed at the Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research (University of Finland, Helsinki) led by Yrjö Engeström. The 'first' and 'second' generation of activity theory worked in the context of psychology as a discipline, while the 'third' generation developed a multidisciplinary research program.

The question of relationships between Vygotsky's cultural historical psychology and Leontiev's activity theory provokes discussions and controversy in international academic communities. Analyzing debates on cultural historical activity theory in China, Hong, Yang & Chen (2007) state that "still today there seems to be a gap how Leont'ev's activity theory is actually connected to Vygotsky's cultural-historical development theory. People may keep asking: 'Is Vygotsky's theory the same thing as what we have talked about to be the activity theory?' Or a similar question: 'Is the activity theory only an expansion of Vygotsky's theory?'

For many reasons, there was very little published concerning Leont'ev's work during the 1930s. This seemed to lead to a 'vacuum zone'" (p.121). In the same paper a theoretical comparison is presented of commonalities and differences of Leontiev and Rubinstein as discussed by Chinese researchers (Hong, Yang, & Chen, 2007). Some differences between Leontiev's and Rubinstein's versions of activity theory have been analyzed by other scholars (Jones, 2000; Dafermos, in press) (the different understanding of the subject matter of psychology and the relationship between internalization-externalization may be considered as most important among them).

The presentation of Vygotsky's, Leontiev's and Luria's legacy are part of the same theoretical framework: similarly, what was defined as CH/AT is common to the three avenues of the introduction of Soviet psychology in Latin America: first, through Marxist circles that were close to the Communist Parties in the region; second, through a group of Cuban psychologists who did doctoral studies in Moscow after the Cuban Revolution, with a few exceptions such as González Rey (González Rey, & Mitjans

Martínez 2013) and third, through North American psychology, because many scholars and practitioners in Latin America have been oriented to its theoretical framework.

Focusing on the third avenue of the introduction of CHAT, it is useful to remember Martin-Baro's warning (1994, p. 20) about the uncritical swallowing of theories and methods from North America psychology: "Latin American psychology looked to its already scientifically and socially respectable 'Big Brother', and, borrowing his methodological and practical conceptual tools, hoped to gain from the power structure in each country, a social status equivalent to that attained by the North Americans".

CH/AT as well as other types of reception of cultural historical psychology in a North American context spread rapidly to other countries and continents. However, as Vygotsky wrote: "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled" (Vygotsky, 1997a, p.261). Anyone who borrows ideas and theoretical systems from North Atlantic psychology and pedagogy, "gets his share of the 'pitch' of these systems, i.e., the philosophical spirit of the authors" (Vygotsky, 1997a, p.261).

From the archival revolution to the reconsideration of understanding Vygotsky's legacy in academic communities

One of the most serious obstacles to understanding Vygotsky's theory is connected with limited access to Vygotsky's works. Vygotsky's *Collected Works* appeared in the Soviet Union in the 1980s and in the 1990's their translation was published in English. However, the six-volume collection of Vygotsky's works is incomplete and does not include many of Vygotsky's works such as *Psychology of Art* (1925), *Educational Psychology* (1926), *Imagination and creativity in childhood* (1930), *Essays in the History of Behavior. Ape. Primitive. Child* (1930; written by Vygotsky and Luria), *Children's Mental Development in the Process of Education* (1935) and etc. More than 90 Vygotsky reviews of theatre performances, and novels in the early 1920s have not been translated in other languages.

Different kinds of mistakes and distortions have been detected in English translations of Vygotsky's works: inaccuracies, suppression of terms or passages, suppression of names, unidentified or suppressed citations, omissions, and outright falsifications (Van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011; Kellogg & Yasnitsky, 2011). These mistakes and distortions have emerged at different moments in the path from the manuscripts and published papers to Soviet editions of Vygotsky's writing and after their translations into English (or other languages).

An 'archival revolution' in Vygotskian studies has taken place. Both publications of Vygotsky's private archives and new undistorted editions of Vygotsky's writings have opened up new opportunities for investigation and understanding of Vygotsky's legacy (Zavershneva, 2008a; Zavershneva, 2008b; Zavershneva, 2009; Zavershneva, (2010a). Zavershneva, 2010b; Zavershneva & Asimov, 2010). Vygotskaia's and Lifanova's book

paints a vivid picture of Vygotsky's life (Vygodskaya & Lifanova, 1996). S.F. Dobkin's memoirs highlight Vygotsky's early life and early development as a thinker (Feingenberg, 2000). Vygotsky's reviews of theater performances, and novels offer a useful insight for an understanding of the later foundation of cultural historical psychology (Feingenberg, 1996). A special mention should be made of the contribution of the *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* in recent archival publications. Moreover, in the context of the '*PsyAnima* Complete Vygotsky' project many 'forgiven' Vygotsky's writings have been republished. This project aims "at republishing all Vygotsky's works and most of works of the representatives of Vygotsky's Circle" (PsychAnima, 2012).

However, by itself the new disclosure of Vygotsky's life and the new editions of Vygotsky's writings is necessary, but not sufficient condition for a deeper understanding of his theory. In my opinion, the creative reconstruction of Vygotsky's theory is possible on the basis of the investigation of three interconnected aspects: (a) the cultural, historical context of its appearance and development, (b) the specific juncture in the history of science, the particular scientific context and links of cultural-historical theory with other theories and (c) the path of Vygotsky's life and the development of his scientific program during his life.

Contextualizing cultural-historical psychology in the history of science as a 'drama of ideas' allows assessment of Vygotsky's contribution in promoting psychological knowledge. Vygotsky's creativity in science is a complex phenomenon and for its comprehension a concrete historical investigation of the mutual interaction of the social, the scientific and the personal dimensions on the process of knowledge production is essential.

Vygotsky was in a creative dialogue with many different thinkers and trends in the history of philosophy and science such as Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Darwin. Vygotsky was "a child of the Silver Age of Russian culture and philosophy and the influence of this should not be underestimated" (Veresov, 2005, p.45).

In accordance with the traditional portrayal of Vygotsky's theory, Vygotsky is presented as a solitary genius. The new inquiries are focused on Vygotsky's personal network of scholars. The personal network of Vygotsky includes not only the members of the 'troika' (Lev Vygotsky, Alexander Luria and Aleksei Leontiev) or 'petiorka' Alexander Zaporozhets, Lidia Bozhovich, Roza Levina, Nataliya Morozova and Liya Slavina), but also many others individuals: Leonid Vladimirovich Zankov (1901-1977), Boris Efimovich Varshava (1900-1927), Zhozefina Il'inichna Shif (1904-1978), Ivan Mikhailovich Solov'ev (1902-1986), Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bernstein (1897-1982), Soviet film director Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein (1898-1948), poet Osip Mandelstam, etc. (Yasnitsky, 2011). Cultural historical psychology emerged in a dialogue with these and many others personalities of Vygotsky's personal network.

Many researchers have contributed essentially to the study of Vygotsky's life and sketch the biography of his ideas (Kozulin, 1990; Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991;

Vygodskaya, & Lifanova, 1996; Veresov, 1999; Keiler, 2002). However, the conceptual and methodological investigation of the development of Vygotsky's research programme remains an open-ended question. The first steps in this direction have been made by Veresov (1999). But even so, the path remains open and researchers still have much work do in order to reveal the contradictions in the development of Vygotsky's research programme in its different stages. From this standpoint, *the conceptual and methodological investigation of cultural-historical theory as a developmental process constitutes the most difficult and challenging issue.*

Conclusion

Vygotsky's legacy has become a source of inspiration for many psychologists and educators around the world. Researchers and educators from different parts of the globe have accepted many ideas of Vygotsky and other Soviet psychologists, because "it seemed to fill certain gaps and answer important questions that had hitherto remained unanswered" (Hyman, 2012, p.644).

The recent study has found that there are multiple readings and interpretations of Vygotsky's theory. Moreover, Vygotsky's theory has been incorporated in a radically different theoretical and methodological 'paradigm'. Cognitivism, cultural relativism and CHAT constitute different frameworks which have emerged in response to demands arising mainly in the North Atlantic context. There is a strong tendency for the integration and incorporation of Vygotsky's theory into mainstream North Atlantic research. The North Atlantic schemes for the reception and implementation of Vygotsky's theory have been expanded across countries in various parts of the globe.

There are at least three main problems in the reception of cultural historical psychology in North-Atlantic research. The first problem is connected with a fragmented reading of particular ideas of Vygotsky, which dominates in North-Atlantic research without enough understanding of the theoretical programme in which these ideas have been included. For example, some fragmented ideas such as ZPD, sign mediation, etc. in separation from the methodology of cultural historical psychology tend to become a synonym of Vygotsky's theory. The dialectical understanding of human development disappeared in the mainstream interpretations of Vygotsky's theory as cognitivism, cultural psychology and CHAT. Moreover, in the mainstream interpretations of Vygotsky's theory it is hard to find the understanding that cultural historical theory is not a closed system of ideas which can be applied in an already prepared form in practice, but a *dynamic, developmental process*.

The second problem is frequently that the expansion and application of cultural-historical psychology in the different social settings does not connect with a consideration of the social and scientific context of its formation. The reconstruction of the theoretical

programme of cultural historical psychology in the social and scientific context of its formation may provide a framework for delineation of its achievements and limitations.

Moreover, as Veresov notes "in order to introduce Vygotsky's theory to world psychology the Western Vygotskians simplified and adapted the whole picture to the existing tradition"(Veresov, 2009, p.290). Many contemporary researchers and practitioners have not developed a critical reflection on their own cognitive schemes and their connections to personal, collective and social practices.

Understanding Vygotsky's theory requires posing at least the following questions: why do we need Vygotsky's theory? Why do we focus on the particular aspects of Vygotsky' legacy (and not on some others)? What do we attempt to do with Vygotsky's ideas?

The 'archival revolution' in Vygotskian studies challenges the mainstream interpretations of Vygotsky's theory and stimulates its reconsideration and reconceptualization. In the light of new findings as the result of the 'archival revolution' it has become clear that Vygotsky's legacy remains "partly forgotten and partly misunderstood" (Veresov, 2009, p.269) or as Elhammoumi (2009) argues "terra incognita".

Future research should focus on developing Vygotsky's theory and methodology in the 21st century and rethinking cultural historical theory from the perspective of problems arising in psychological, educational, and social practice around the globe. Moving with and beyond Vygotsky remains unexplored territory (Barahona, Benitez, Dafermos, & Hakkarainen, 2014).

Acknowledgment

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CHAPTER 2

THE PARADOXES OF AN AUTONOMOUS STUDENT. FORMS OF APPROPRIATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN BUENOS AIRES METROPOLITAN AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

Ricardo Jorge Baquero
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Introduction

The paper that will be commented is part of different initiatives in which we have been exploring the relation between the organization and the conditions of teaching and learning practices in educational institutions, and the possibilities of inclusion, basically, of students from popular sectors[1] (Baquero et al, 2008; Baquero, et al. 2009). We are particularly interested in the analysis of school experiences that have proved variations in different mode and degree, which have collaborated in facing the phenomenon described as school failure of massive type (Lus, 1995). From our perspective, we understand that this phenomenon, that is to say, those interruptions or deviations is the school trajectories – intermittent assistance, grade retention, dropouts, poor academic performance, etc. – which affect a great proportion of the school population, generally from popular sectors, from immigrant populations, etc. – cannot be reduced, not theoretically not even empirically, into a sum of individual "failures".

This point of view, since then, has led, simultaneously, to produce or sign a review on the strong standardize character of the school practices in modernity and also

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[1] It is related to different research and intervention projects on the problem of the "school failure" of the massive type and the variations of the school format in elementary and high levels in schools that mainly serve students from the popular sectors. Projects developed mainly on the Research Program "School, difference and inclusion", from the National University of Quilmes, from Argentina. Among them, we can find the PICT Project "The inclusion of the voices of the students in learning processes. Variations of the forms of participation and appropriation of the school experience in high school."

about the role that the psycho-educational practices played and have been playing in their legitimacy and on their production of a reduction or pseudo-explanation on the stories of "school failure" to "deficits" that would take the students, or, even so, getting suspicious in the region about the learning capability of the educated population from popular sectors (Baquero, 2001; Baquero, et. al., 2008).

This described panorama has led us to focus on creating conditions of learning possibilities in the instituted practices rather than to collaborate with the refinement of the suspicious on the capabilities of the students. In this paper, we intend to show, particularly, some advances related to the exploration and management conditions of a teaching initiative in high school level. We will describe the development of certain experiences of school work within the Project Our School Asks Your Opinion (hereafter POSAYO), developed in public high schools from the Buenos Aires metropolitan area[2]. Schools that serve predominantly students from popular sectors. This experience, ongoing, attempts to explore, as we shall see, the possibilities of subject positions or alternative forms of management by both students and teachers. Somehow, the forms which the school/academic work adopts constitute this relatively vacant field in the analysis of school experiences related to the rules governing the activities of teaching and "going to school", as says Engeström (cf. Engeström, 1998; 2008). Effectively, the substrate that defines the community, the rules and tasks division, in the expansive learning model of this author, we can assimilate the aspects related to the school system as the sum of rules and charges that weigh on the students regarding to their attendance (or absence) at classes; the forms of approval in the school subjects, like the approval, for instance, "en bloc", of a set of them aiming the promotion of a school grade to another, etc. (Baquero, et al, 2012). The substrate may also contemplate the forms of school work in the broader sense, including the organization form that takes the same teaching assignments and the distribution of relative subject positions among teachers, or between teachers and students, between school managers and teachers, etc. We will analyze, indeed, the last aspects in which the experience is focused.

After presenting the wide framework of concerns and conceptual positions in which the investigation that will be commented is subscribed, we will make a brief analysis of it, considering that, despite its modesty, it contains an interesting potential to burst into a very predictable school daily. An attempt to change, which illustrates and reinforces the findings of other studies, in the sense that it is allowed to inform the tensions between the dominant logic of school activities and the creation of local alternatives, such as certain

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[2]   The AMBA includes the City of Buenos Aires and Greater Buenos Aires, a conglomerate of 24 divisions of the province of Buenos Aires.

consequences not always pondered by the initiatives, as the teachers workload and the pressure to comply the prescribed syllabus, the kind of interaction between multiple activity system that lead to change, or to certain "hybrid" practices, etc. (Engeström, 2008; Sannino, 2008; Baquero, et al, 2009). It is, as we shall see, a modest but valuable attempt to give major initiative and legitimacy to the voices and decisions made by the students on the learning processes themselves. Considering our worry on the nature of the modern school – as its hard standard-setter character and the *infant* position in which places the students (cf. Narodowski, 1994; Baquero y Narodowski, 1994) –, it will be understood that we will find something paradoxical in the battle for generating "autonomous students". Perhaps, for this reason, it is considered worthwhile.

In this sense, our work has proposed to develop a situational perspective on the base of the developments of the Socio-cultural Approaches with special attention to the interrelation of the development processes and subjective constitution and school practices of modern type. In our judgment, as we will try to show, the development of this approach needs, in addition to the evident change in the units of analysis in the explanatory approach – going beyond the individual – to observe the specific forms in which they materialized and materialize the school practices. Faithful to the old Vygotskian conception that the educational practices do not superficially affect the development forms but they modify in a radical way all the forms of conduct of the child, we think that, particularly, all kind – or kinds – of development and subject positions must be observed. We consider that we have to seriously explore the hypothesis that the processes of massive schooling in modernity produced the modern "infancy" through the obligatory and massive position of the children like students. In other words, in a Foucauldian sense, the school and the teaching practices can turn like "government practices" producers of types of historically specific development and subjectivity (Baquero, 1996; 2012).

We have been especially attentive in this sense of the development or analysis of the educational projects, in turn, to the diverse forms of appropriation or management to which the analyzed experiences give place, comprehending that one of the criteria to analyze its relative impact consists in adverting the changes of the subject position, being able to break certain passivity in case of the students and certain bureaucratization of the practices of the teachers or school managers. This process has implied, from already, on one hand, revising the current and possible role that the developments and psycho-educative interventions can play.

It is important, to our ends, to mark the targets of the analyzed project inside the general perspective on the contemporary problems and the peculiarity, as it was indicated, that the modern school type keeps. In turn, we understand that the constitution of the same psycho-educational labor camp in light of the massive schooling processes must be analyzed. Finally, before briefly presenting the march of the project in execution, we will try to show the importance that the SCA (Socio-cultural Approaches) can have, as

they can, in a refined way, assist the simultaneity of problems that the development and subject position present, the particular characteristics of the school device and its mutual relation (cf. Engestrom, 1991; Daniels, 2001; 2010; Valsiner 2008). It means that they can collaborate with the development of a perspective that warns about the risks of a psychological look, reductive in the end, that does not warn about the specificity of the educational practices, particularly the schooling ones, and its political nature in the end.

The modern schooling processes and the psycho-educative approach

The consideration of the school forms of cognitive development, or development in general, within the Socio-cultural Approaches (SCA), understood like an expression of the forms of development and social and historical practices which came in modernity, can suggest some supposed harmony between the criteria of socio/historical and ontogenetic progress (Baquero, 2009). Somehow, Matusov (2008), in a provocative work, rests one part of the identity of the current Vygotskian works in this historicist aspect, opposed to a part of the community of neo-Vygotskian, in which is included, more attentive to the culturally diverse character that the development processes take, pointing out the risks of a teleological conception of both historical and psychological progress.

In our view, beyond the detail of the controversy caused by Matusov and the tones that could be agreed or not with his claims, his work has the virtue to bring out the character, in certain irreducible way, of the processes of the educational kind, particularly the ones of the schooling type, to a basic psychological approach. As it was anticipated, it warns or reminds, at last, the pedagogical character and the meaning or political effect that the massive and compulsory schooling processes have which are materialized in modernity and the relevancy of some specificity in the pedagogical approaches (Daniels, 2006; 2010; Moll, 1990).

Moreover, our working concern, for several years, is installed in the way that the educational psychology and, particularly, the classic works of the evolutionary psychology and the individual differences measurement, are constructed in the heat of the massive schooling processes. That is, although it seems trivial, the schooling practices constituted an essential laboratory to produce normative criteria and standard-setter practices, as well as a set of knowledge on the nature of the processes of development and learning placed in school setting.

In addition, the processes of massive and compulsory schooling centrally chose specific forms of work organization of teaching and learning – like the simultaneity and the gradualness – which, added to the mandatory attendance, subjectively positioned

the children population in a specific way. Beyond certain differences in historiographical aspects, there seems to be consensus that the processes of massive schooling of modernity strongly collaborated with the production of modern *childhood*. That is, parenting and educational practices were developed in a segregation of the childish culture and the adult culture and in a perception of the children which were considered or produced as heteronymous children – that is to say, not autonomous –, and needing a gradual and graduated access to the adult/schooling culture. An identification will be produced, as it will be evident, between *student* and *infant* positions, and the first one will keep relative independence with respect to the age, since it will treat the pupil or student within the academic school activities more in a subject positioning than by an "evolutionary" description (Narodowski, 1994; Baquero and Narodowski, 1004).

The concomitant emergence of the classic evolutionary psychologies, that according to Valsiner drank from the Darwinian evolutionist epistemology, in the embryology and psychiatry developments (Valsiner, 1994), found, within the massive schooling practices, an emergency surface of psychoevolutionary and psycho-educational objects, descriptive/explanatory and simultaneously normative. The object of study, even enunciated like the supposedly natural childhood, has inevitably been set as the desirable infancy. The regular development criteria, in turn, both in their achievements expectation and for their sequence by chronological ages, have been materialized on the base of the highly normalized academic performance expectations system (Serpell and Hatano, 1997). This is the nature of a "graduated" system, where the reasonable gradualness in the sequence of contents by their internal logic, it is actually translated into an organization of the school groups by age assuming their homogeneous nature and disregarding the obvious different life courses and learning experiences of the students. A "delay" or a "detour" can be defined only in this institutional and historically definite – then naturalized – framework (Baquero and Terigi, 1996). In this regard, the development of the evolutionary psychologies does not seem to have escaped, but rather contributed to configure a representation of the modern infancy and practices that produced it as such. Bruner himself, paying tribute to Freud, Piaget and Vygotsky, as we can remember, enunciated:

"The theories of human development, once accepted in the mainstream culture, do not simply work like descriptions of the human nature and its growth. For their character, like recognized cultural representation, they give, on the other hand, a social reality to the processes that try to explain and, to a certain degree, to the "facts" that they quote as foundation" (Bruner, 1988, p. 138).

Some problems of time. Educability and school: from the "infrequent monsters" to the common students.

These mutual constitution processes of the massive schooling practices and of the psycho-educative knowledge and practices, have rested on an epistemic basis that configured the possible approach forms both of development and the same schooling processes. Benasayag points out that a large number of the modern thought rested, on one hand, on the *mythical figure of an individual* – autonomous and scissile both of his social and natural order – as well as undivided, preventing from seeing the multiplicities that shape or cross him (Benasayag, 2006). On the other hand, the modern episteme is based on a myth of *indefinite and teleological progress*, motorized fundamentally by the techno-science and its development. As it will be understood, both myths have theoretical and practical relevancy consequences at the time of comprehending how the modern schooling practices are configured as well as the way which the ontogenetic development is comprised. Both historical and ontogenetic development appeared represented in a kind of evolutionary matrix where direction, grade and rhythms of the development allowed to classify populations or subjects according to their supposed level of development or their "angle of deviation" regarding the desirable and naturalized goals.

These desirable and naturalized goals constituted, to a great extent, the north of the schooling practices. The configuration of the school with its specific format – simultaneous and graduated, with meticulous regulations of the time – sat the conditions of what had to be understood as natural/normal development. Originally, the school conceived by Comenius supposed the construction of a method that would catch the vast majority of talents and wills that was expected to be found in a diverse way of extending the education to the children universe. A tiny minority of subjects would probably be reluctant to any method, after having considered that many of them would be apparently unteachable, since it would be a task of the teacher to restore the educability conditions clearly altered by upbringing and hardly attributable to the children nature (Comenius, 1986).

It should be noted that Comenius' work, considered a founder of modern pedagogy (Narodowski, 1994), spreads ideas of supreme importance. On one hand, the construction of the method is the result of a history and a craft (Baquero, 2001), that is to say, the school practice do not have anything natural; secondly, such method should conclude in obtaining resonance in the diversity of all children talents and wills; the reluctance to the method in all its attempts and variants would define, in rare cases, the unteachable character of the subjects and these ones, since the educability is an attribute of the human being, would be considered "human monsters". It does not seem a population comparable to the children and the young from popular sectors on which has fallen,

recently, the weight of sociological or psychological suspicions on their educability (Neufeld. and Thisted, 2004)[3].

The modern turn seems to have consisted in "schooling" the educability criterion already taking the modern schooling practices as a naturalized context. The *teachable* being is no longer an attribute of *all* the human beings – considering the cultural nature of the subjective constitution processes – to happen to insensibly be an attribute of some human beings. It is understood that this brings obvious consequences not only for the special education but for the treatment of the massive school failure which its pseudo-explanation is based on the old hypothesis of deficit of the subjects from popular sectors.

The work that we will illustrate comes from the attempt of seriously taking the complex, uncertain and open human development character from the sociocultural approaches – already present in the original ZPD category (Valsiner and Van der Veer, 1993) and the restrictive and productive role simultaneously with the instituted practices, which rules must be made visible to understand the tensions and effects that they produce on the subject positions, the forms of management or the motives development (Engestrom, 2008; 2009). School practices can provide rich experiences territory that expend learning and allow the identification and appropriation of the subjects, as they also can be a resistance stage that include or not the mastery of the practices in within (Engestrom, 1991; Wertsch, 1998). Thus, the apprehension of the motivation or senses of the school experience might never be reduced to the evaluation in learning.

The sense problem that the schooling practices keep will probably turn an inevitable problem. Every time we find the certainty of the old modern episteme fallen, of the legitimization forms based on the Nation State forms, of the teleological development models as historical as ontogenetic and the complex forms of contemporary life and the possibilities of explanation and prediction under the casual-linear paradigm (Edwards, 2009; Benasayag, 2006; Castorina and Baquero, 2005; Valsiner, J. 2008). Add up the risk of the utilitarian educational conceptions ascent to the peak of a pedagogy for competencies, not always warned of its possible effects, precisely, about the sense and the political bonds of the educational experience, now circumscribed to provide the weapons/competencies for a threatening and competitive future (del Rey, 2010).

Next we will briefly present the context where the POSAYO educational experience is developed in the high school level, where we try to explore the possibilities of major autonomy positions by the students. We will select, within the experience development, a

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[3]   Judging by the interest put by the pedagogue Meirieu in the topic, it seems to exceed the judgments expressed in Latin America (Meirieu, 2001).

local aspect that we judge relevant and it is related to the relatively free choice possibility by the students of a topic to be investigated in and outside the school environment. This will work, hopefully, as the experience analyzer and its tensions with the inertia of the school format.

The students voices and their school experiences: Our School Asks Your Opinion Project case

High school[4] has been a center of a series of transformations in Latin America and in particular in Argentina in the last decades, like the establishment of its obligatory nature, and with it the inclusion of sectors of the population that traditionally did not have access to it, as well as the redefinition and questioning of its more widespread senses as well as an exploration of the possible academic formats (Terigi, 2009). Although, throughout the years the level attended a continuous increase in the enrollment, especially in the Province of Buenos Aires (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007 and 2011, and Rivas, 2010), the massification of the method is accompanied by at least two clearly pronounced issues: on one hand, the high grade retention rates and, on the other hand, the low concluding level rates (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007). In the Province of Buenos Aires, where this experience is developed, as well as in other urban areas of the country, the significant increase in the access levels is accompanied, in turn, for major levels of repetition and/or studies dropout. Rivas (2010) points out that only 31% of the students who joins the first grade of elementary education conclude high school. He/She adds, in turn, that the abandonment issue is concentrated in high school: "While in no grade of elementary education the abandonment overcomes 2% of the students, in upper high school (ex Polimodal) is 18.6% (year 2007) and it climbs up to 25,4% in the last year level (Rivas, 2010):146). Numerous experiences have been promoted and documented in the region trying to point out or promote inclusive strategies in the level (Terigi, 2009). Among them it seems relevant for us, as we go forward, to investigate those that have tested changes in the students' academic work allowing major flexibility in the strategies of

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4   The National Education Law number 26.206, in Argentina, establishes kindergarten, elementary and high school as mandatory. Thus, the students must attend the educational system compulsorily for thirteen years. Kindergarten lasts one year, while elementary level can last six or seven years, according to each of the 24 jurisdictions/Provinces into which it is divided. This way, high school will be able to last five years (if it initiates in 8th grade in the jurisdiction), or six years (if it initiates in 7th grade in the jurisdiction). The structure of high school, in turn, is divided in two cycles: a Basic Cycle, of common character to all the orientations and an Oriented Cycle, of diversified character according to different knowledge areas.

study completed by the students. On the other hand, it has been specially interesting to us to analyze educational experiences in the level that allow major autonomy in the management of the proper learning processes, ways of appropriation different from the school experience, in the local aspects of it. There are several initiatives in the school territory that are promoted both by government agencies, non-government organizations and/or personal initiatives of teachers and school managers. In order to explore such initiatives in the framework of the research project *The Inclusion of the students voices in the learning process. Variations of the participation and appropriation forms of the school experience in high school*[5], we have investigated in particular the implementation of the Project "*Our School Asks Your Opinion*".

The POSAYO project shows among its objectives the intention of promoting the possibility to students position themselves as producers of knowledge about their own realities and interests. For it, the starting point is the possibility that the students themselves can purpose research topics to go forward along with their teachers. To the effects of this work, and in line with the described research project, some first impressions and conclusions will appear here, thinking about how to illustrate, in a specific way, the particular effects that the legitimization of the students voices and interests have in the development of the alternative subject positions to the classically promoted by the modern school.

The work hypothesis is that the educational experiences that introduce changes in the forms of participation of the students, where their experiences are valued and their voices are heard, to the interior of the school, have a positive effect on learning and on the senses constructions and the school experience appropriation. We are based on the assumption that the lack of questioning to the traditional ways of conceiving the position of student would be one of the aspects that influence the difficulty of the pupils in constructing learning and meanings and in appropriating, finally, the school proposal.

The POSAYO Project begins to be developed in Argentina in 2010, being framed in a more extended network of participating countries in Latin America. Originated in Brazil, in 2001, as a result of a partnership between Educational Action NGO and Paulo Montenegro Institute, POSAYO later begins to be spread in a diverse way in countries like Chile, Colombia and Mexico, finally setting in Argentina. In Argentina, POSAYO is generated during 2009 as an agreement between IBOPE Argentina and National

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[5]   PICT2011 2194 "The inclusion of the students voices in the learning processes. Variations in the forms of participation and appropriation of the school experience in high school." National University of Quilmes. In charge of the Responsible Researcher Ricardo Baquero. National Agency for Scientific and Technological Promotion, of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation of the Presidency of the Nation, through the Fund for Scientific and Technological Research (FONCyT).

University of Quilmes regulating its beginning for the year of 2010. Currently it takes place in six high schools of the educational system, all of them located in the City of Quilmes, Province of Buenos Aires. These schools serve to a population of students from approximately thirteen to eighteen years old, and in general coming from families that live with scarce resources.

POSAYO development implies, therefore, joint actions among educational institutions, the immediate governmental bodies of the schools – like the Examination instances – University researchers, regional coordinators of the project belonging to the Educational Action Foundation, members of Paulo Montenegro Institute and IBOPE representatives. The local project coordination is handled by a team from the University, in some cases consisting of researchers developing Master's projects about the development of the same project. The instances enumeration does not chase a mere informative end, but tries to contextualize the complexity of relations and instances that the educational intervention in an educational institution can suppose and the inevitable combinatorial analysis of objectives and always different work logics that are necessary to consider and to articulate in its development.

The institutions and teachers voluntarily joined the project. Teachers and school managers that are part of POSAYO periodically participate in trainings and reflections on the project implementation, in activities organized both from the Regional Coordination of the Project and from the local Coordination.

As it has been anticipated, the fundamental POSAYO objective is related to the possibility of promoting several learning practices where the students can conduct the research issues and/or problems of interest – especially through opinion polls. Topics are chosen, as we will see, by the students with the orientation of the teachers. This clearly implies the production of changes in the decision-making mechanism on the topics to work and the alternative ways of specifying the activity with regard to the habitual school logics, trying to grant, this way, a relevant place to the voices and knowledge of the students. It is understood that the choice of the subject by the students enables and promotes a greater degree between the school culture and infantile and juvenile cultures. This intends to assist, somehow, those voices that indicate the frequent decontextualization of the knowledge taught in the school, with regard to those produced in the out-of-school contexts. Thus, the daily experiences of children and young people understood as problematic or simply their personal interests are the knots that operate as subject matters source on which to develop the researches. This way, since the proposed guidelines from POSAYO we understand the research as an educational practice and the school not just a knowledge transmitter but, mainly, as a producer of it (Montenegro and Ribeiro, 2001). In this context, the students are positioned like "researchers", like knowledge producers, altering thus the traditional position of recipients.

Among the several moments of the general implementation of the project, the *presentation* of it is done to the students, generally by exhibiting some videos that describe and document past experiences performed, in some cases, by students from the same school. As it has been anticipated, the *choice of the topic* is a particularly critical moment in the development of the project, when the students are asked to propose topics to be researched and, as it will be seen, dynamics are tested in order to analyze the alternatives and to take decisions on their final choice. As soon as the research topic is chosen, the project passes to a moment called *qualification*, in which teachers but especially the students, look for information, consult qualified informants – sometimes with the support of the University or community organizations – they analyze it, value and systematize it in order to approach the researched topic from several perspectives or focuses, contributing to its comprehension. Once the qualification of the topic is finished, a survey is analyzed and applied with the purpose to take into account the opinion of a sector of the population with respect to the subject matter. Subsequently, the data are tabulated and analyzed and some materials are produced, such as videos, posters, etc. for the purpose of publicizing the topics and the results and to allow an exchange. Finally, a central instance, it is to share these productions in a meeting, at the National University of Quilmes, with the students from the several schools that participate in the project. From POSAYO proposal it has been promoted that, as it turns out to be viable and pertinent to the approached issue, the students can think about a possible intervention form or a form of giving back the results to their communities, indicating the importance of the impact that this action can provoke in them. It would exceed the limits of this work to consider the several possibilities that each of these instances opens, such as the perspective of the academic learning development, the forms of teamwork, the collective experiences of decision-making, the procedure of several conflicts, the contact with realities and different problems tied to their own lives or to the belonging community, the communicable results production – and the particular problems that this itself raises in the election of ways of communicating – the reflection on the recipients, the objective and contents to be prioritized and even, the discussion and exchange with other students and teachers in the final moment of joint exhibition.

A particularly important point to consider, in turn, how each instance represents different working methods among the students, between the students and the teachers, between the teachers themselves, between the teachers and the school managers. The development of the experiences could have given account of the complementarity and solidarity of roles and tasks completed by both students and teachers. The development of the project not only promotes several collective work instances on the part of the students, but also, as it has been anticipated, many collective forms of work between the teachers. The possible changes in the forms of participation are logically a product of a change in the distribution forms of relative positions and, if it is wanted, of the rules that usually regulate the school activity of a dominant way (Engeström, 2009).

Voices and relative positions of teachers and students in POSAYO: choosing the topic

These emergent changes[6] in the subject positions that the several subjects adopt in the milestone of their school experiences, and with it, in the forms in which they take part of the same ones, could be traced from the beginnings of the project, when some starting points with regard to the form in which the moment of the *choice of the topic* would happen were agreed between teachers, school managers and the team that coordinates POSAYO. This implied discussing and agreeing on the necessary and possible changes of the teacher position at the moment of proposing to the students the choice of the problem to be researched. It was indicated that the topic chosen by the students would be respected, even if this one was not coinciding with the interests and specific formation of the teachers and even if they were not keeping immediate relations with the matter or specific syllabus structure in which the project was proposed. Some teachers expressed – with certain distress in some cases – that the fact that the students could choose what they wanted to learn would be more than new but an absolute challenge. It was thought that a possible form of teaching intervention had to do with the possibility of asking and re-asking about the chosen topics, in order to "restrict them" as much as possible.

It is noted here that, as the students choose topics not related to the teachers areas of work – which is what usually happens – the teachers have to share with them a position of someone who do not know something or a position where they have to research or look for information. In short, the starting point, the relative equality between teachers and students is established by not knowing about the topic that they are going to investigate. In the opinion of Ranciére, the starting point for both teachers and students is ignorance (Ranciére, 2003). In this regard, one of the teachers said:

> T1: *We went out of the usual planning and through this practice we could know the young: which issues concern them or call their attention... what is their reality out of school... Topics that are part of life itself (...) The successful of the proposal is the teacher and student learning, the first one learns to let the other speak and trust that they can do it.*

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[6]   The materials presented here come from a series of resources used in the framework of the project in question. The methodological perspective has been qualitative, especially the ethnographic type. In this framework, participating observations and their corresponding field records have been produced for long periods of time by the researchers in the school institution. School activities have been filmed in the milestone of POSAYO, and interviews have been done in depth, both with teachers and with students.

Another teacher, in the same line, added:

T2: During the project implementation, teachers and students started to make ourselves comfortable, occupying a place in this challenge that we had decided to face. At first, with a lot of uncertainty, being afraid of breaking the regular work schemes in the classroom; being surprised and astonished on having explored new ways of conducting the educational practices; where each student could reveal their skills, their tastes, their interests and, at the same time, they can discover and value new aspects.

With regard to the subject positions adopted here, one of the participant teacher added:

T1: This project allows me to relate to the young from a different position. I believe it is the talk, the constant dialogue, the attitude of leaving the monotony of a normal class and "going out" of the classroom to do different activities... the things that commit us very much with we try to carry on. In my case, I am very thrilled when I hear they talking and presenting their ideas (or I may be already old), because I think that they did not learn a specific concept of the subject, but they acquired something much more important than all these concepts: values, being able to raise an idea and being heard by the others, planning, being able to know that if they accept a proposal they can obtain the unattainable thing.

According to the observations made, when the teachers present the project to the students, they offer a benchmark with respect to POSAYO institutional origins – the bodies that intervene – they realize the basic pedagogical alignments, they talk about the different moments of the project and about the presentation that will be made at the end of the year. Next, they ask the students, in groups, to write in a sheet the topics on which they would like to research. Subsequently, all the sheets are stuck on a chalkboard, and someone asks the students to argue why they chose that topic. This moment can take a meeting, or more, depending on the agreement that exists in the group. On some occasions, when there are at least two topics in progress and an agreement or group agreement is not achieved, a vote is taken. It is interesting to think about this process, on the position that the teacher takes regarding the choice of the topic. In principle, it is interesting to notice here that the form that the school managers and/or teachers offer to their students the possibility of selecting the topic seems to change according to the profile of the teacher or the sense that the same ones award their profession and/or the project. This way, for example, one of the principals, with a long tradition of social activism, at the moment of proposing the topic to the students, says:

T3: Think about a topic you would like to research, some problem which affects the neighborhood, that we can give a solution, intervene. Let's think about which social problems we see here, something you want to deepen and propose a solution.

Another involved teacher, whose gaze seems to be more attentive to students motivation, says:

T4: The idea is that they choose a topic that they like, that interests them, that arouses their curiosity.

Two questions arise from this. On the one hand, we can see that even if the choice of the topic is free for the students, the perspective of the teacher, the sense that he awards to his profession and/or project, and the way itself of presenting the choice, it seems to *condition* or print certain bias on the topic to be chosen. The course of the first mentioned teacher (T3), whose profession seems to be conceived from a social and/or political optics, finally chose the topic of "Garbage in the neighborhood", while in the second case (T4), which teacher seems to be concerned about the "motivation" of the students, the chosen topic was "Teen pregnancy". They were both topics that experientially involved them in many cases and quite directly, but the pathways of its definition were clearly different.

Subjects and choice situation

In this vein, it is possible to point out that even if the "choice" of the topic should stay "on the hands of the students", the forms in which the teachers present the topic, propose the choice of the same one, ask or agree on the intervention of a student, it seems to print certain bias or perspective and even in some cases, determine its choice. Certainly, we could not split these local processes of choice and the decision-making by the participants, both from their singularities and reasons, and from the more structural long term elements that inevitably tighten them. As we pointed out at the beginning, the positions assigned to the students – which place them, wrongly, in a *childish* position of heteronomy and relative passivity or a kind of "not knowing" – can be affected, but this involves both a process to be supported in time, and the conflicts presentation between or within the subjects. In fact, increasing the autonomy of the students, even if it is an explicit objective of the syllabus, contradicts or conflicts with the low participation provided for them in the choice of the topics, the decision-making in the institutional life or even the management of their own learning, which seem that they are captured in the rules that regulate the activity – as in the academic work – and not only in the personal representations that construct teachers and students. If desired, the produced relative innovation conflicts with the forms of dominant activity in the school practices, those that not only allow or limit its possibility but that can absorb or hybrid its effects (Saninno, 2008; Engeström, 2008). An example

of the variety of effects that the topics choice can produce on the ways of presentation of the teacher and the attempt for breaking with the "school" logic, remained illustrated when one of POSAYO participant[7] teachers, during the third year of implementation of the project in the classrooms, said during one of the meetings that she was tired of the topics that her students used to choose, pointing out that often, *they chose school topics*, or that they were usually treated as school topics. She pointed out that she felt that there was something missing and she would try to present the project to her students in a different way. Thus it was that, during the third year of work, the teacher asked the students to write on a sheet and in an individual and anonymous way – in opposition to the group and identifiable work in which the topics were chosen up to this moment –, topics which they felt that they could not find the answers. Indeed, this way of investigating the interests of the students raised questions such as: *"Is there life after death?", What happens after the death?", "Why do we fall in love?", "Where does love come from?".*

In order to illustrate some of the points that we are pointing out, the way in which the diverse voices of teachers (where T2 also participates) and students of a course of the 5th grade of one of the participant high schools intervene at the moment of choosing the topic will be described in a succinct way. Ethnographic notes, resulting from filming and observations made in classrooms, will be shown below:

> *"During the day of the topic choice, after presenting the project, organized in small groups, the students are asked to write on a sheet topics that are interesting for them and on which they would like to research. Five groups are formed and one is chosen to be observed. Five students, four women and two men participate in the group. When we approached the group, Santiago says to us "We were just going to begin", the reason why we can perceive that our presence is conceived as a pressure. They do not talk about the project, so it is decided to intervene and propose again, now to the group, to think about topics that they would like to research. Natalia begins to suggest several issues, but she says that the one that she is more interested in is about children who live on the streets. When she stops talking, the group remains silent. In this moment Andrés intervenes saying "What are we going to talk about? Why did we get together?". Timidly the other girls, Gloria and Alicia, begin to talk, however, the first one intervenes saying "Natalia knows, she must speak... she is also generous, she always collects clothes and stuff". Luisa, a member of the School Counseling Team and a POSAYO participant, approaches to ask the students to store up their cell phones. Andrés seems to*

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[7]   Teacher previously mentioned as T2. This reference will be maintained to give account of the variations that had been produced in form of participation and appropriation of the project by the teacher throughout the years.

want to write... but he has doubts... his partners, Gloria and Alice, spell some word to him, such as addiction. Santiago does not propose anything, he does not speak, and he just uses his cell phone. In other of the observed groups, the topics that are finally written in a sheet "on behalf of the group" it seem to be ideas of one or two people. The teacher approaches the first group, and she intervenes asking about the chosen topics, asking again about some topics in particular, for certain topics she makes comments such as "Good!", "This is very important!" and "Very good observation!". That seems to make the students feel enthusiastic and speak more. When the recess comes, we continue[8] speaking with the teacher about the choice of the topics. We both express the worry about the choices. We point out that they must be repeated... I ask the teacher about the possibility of using the same strategy used last year. She agrees and says "I swear I do not even want to talk trying not to influence them. I do not even want to tell the last year topics". For my part, I really want to intervene because I do not like the proposed topics. We ask the students again to anonymously write in a sheet a topic that they are interested in researching and to ask questions that they always wanted to know the answers. Initially, the proposal bothers them, but then they seem to be filled with enthusiasm. Some of them propose again the same topic as in the previous dynamics. Finally, the teacher asks them to write all the proposed topics on the chalkboard. She asks the students to tell why they chose those topics giving reasons for the choice. We also participated. Among the different proposed topics, three probable topics are selected: "The increase in wealth in hands of few people, and major quantity of people living in poverty", "Love among the young" and "The contamination". Most of the group inclines to the love among the young topic, nevertheless, some voices that seem to possess major legitimacy fight for the topic of "Wealth and poverty". This topic has been proposed by Luisa, member of the school counseling team. She tells them about why it seems important to approach this issue. Juan, one of the students who seem to be a group leader, points out that he does not like the topic of love among the young because, in any case, people always talk about it and that it seems important to him to approach the topic of the poverty. The group does not contradict him. Natalia, the student who had proposed to approach the topic of "Children who live on the streets", supports Luisa, pointing out that the topics are related. Finally, unable to reach a consensus, a vote is done and the topic of "Wealth and poverty" ends up being the chosen one. No one contradicts that, but in the following meetings many students will individually say that they did not choose this topic".

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[8]   In the narrated case, one of us participated as a researcher in the development of the project with a teacher who already had previous experience in the same. The use of the first person in the story is because, as noted, much of the field work is being addressed from an ethnographic perspective. From this perspective, the implication of the researcher, as well as his own impressions, become a key source analysis.

First of all, it is important to point out here that the forms in which the voices of the students appear, as well as the form that they are legitimized, seem to be tied to power relations that come into play between teachers and students, but also between the last ones. Thus, as it has been indicated, the form in which a teacher should ask, the way of agreeing or disagreeing with the students interventions, it seems to imply or not imply these interventions legitimization. This seems to happen also among the students themselves. This way, the voices of those recognized like the most intelligent, or like the leaders of the group in question, seem to affect directly both the dynamics of the project in particular, and the dynamics of the class in general. In many cases, divisions inside the students groups were reflected in this moment and it turned out to be, in certain cases, an achievement of the project to allow the change of the relations from the establishment of a common object.

It is interesting to emphasize here that it has been observed in numerous opportunities that the fact that the students should be the ones who take a series of decisions during POSAYO implementation it seems, in some moment, to affect these power relations that are established in terms of speaking. Thus, there have been many cases when the students which had been labeled as "the quiet kids" spoke in the key moments of the project, moments like the final presentation of POSAYO which has a high degree of exhibition. The changes of the condition of the school experience itself usually allow the rearrangement of different positions, movements with regard to the assumed or awaited positions.

The second point to emphasize is that the participation of the same student can change along the project, simply because he or she can demonstrate to be interested in certain punctual moments of the project, and not in others. This is extremely interesting, and it has attracted several reflections from the teachers on this matter. Knowing some of the extra-curricular interests of the students (in photography, in making videos, in performing, etc.) has allowed teachers to propose different activities in certain moments of implementing POSAYO. This, coupled with the variety of different situations in which it was possible to collaborate in developing the project, led to changes of the positions and habitual participation ways of the students who joined those generated within the groups. The changes of the school experience condition itself, the recovery of the diversity of the knowledge of the students beyond the intramural moderated ones, plus the confidence deposited in the possibilities of taking part in the authentically collective production, usually seems to allow the rearrangement of different positions, movements with regard to the assumed or awaited positions. This movement and its assessment were reflected in diverse interviews carried out to students and teachers that, for brevity, we will not present here.

Motives and meanings

So far, we have seen how the change of certain possibility conditions in the teaching practices – for example, changes in the subject positions, and with it, in the participation forms – begin to tighten a series of situations usually conceived as natural or inherent in a school experience, such as the *infantilization* of the student population, or the distribution of the knowledge between teachers and students, etc. We have highlighted how the conditions that come from POSAYO proposal, seem to imply both for teachers and for students, the exploration of certain ways of appropriating and taking part in the experiences, where to speak and letting to speak, begin to enable new positions, to enable perhaps that the possibility of an educational experience happens. What is allowed, in other words, is the passage from the usual school routine to the creation of conditions for the experience possibility, to the production of multiple senses about the school experience itself.

It is necessary to emphasize, finally, an important aspect. A report of the topics chosen by the students during the period 2010- 2012 shows the fact that the topic of "The violence" in its different forms (domestic violence, gender violence, school violence, soccer violence, among others) is one of most chosen in this period. Secondly, there are topics as "Teen pregnancy", "Abortion" and "Sexuality". Students have talked about the following topics in a reduced form: "What do the beneficiaries of social (welfare) programs think about them?", "Animal abuse", "Garbage in the neighborhood" and "Life after death", among others.

Beyond the really multiple aspects that come into play, as we have seen, in the choice of the topic, it must be emphasized the relevancy and the importance that exist in almost all the cases. This fact does not turn out to be less important for the effects that the development of the experience produces inside the institutions and in the community, since it denies the habitual stereotype of the "absolute" lack of learning motivation of the adolescents and the young from popular sectors. If it is necessary, we clear that aspect pointed out by the teacher who indicated that kind of "encapsulation" of the school learning that was difficult to fail even in the framework of the project and that obligates to analyze the learning motivation problem in a situational and not reduced way to a kind of previous dispositional state of the subjects for learning.

Learning motivation implies the appropriation of the motives – its domain and identification with them – that regulate and cheer up the activity proposed even in its possible tension, as we have seen, with the dominant logic of the school. It is linked

with a central point of epoch relative on how to understand and to collaborate with the possible senses that keep the schooling practices for the subjects inside an uncertain environment avoiding its labeling before its apparent powerlessness or paralysis.

The sense of the school practices themselves keeps a complexity to be considered in our inquires, both for its "runaway objects" in Engeström's sense (Engeström, 2009), which claim interagency approaches and the search for actions not always predictable in advance, and for its irreducible specificity and situatedness (Daniel, 2010) that forces to carefully assist the tensions between the local level of analysis and the logic of the school practices in its widest regulations. It even has to assist the apparent paradox that our stigmatizing predictions are fulfilled usually about the students of popular sectors, on the base of its supposed deficits or poor histories of learning, perpetrating the one that we have called a *deceit of abstraction of the situation*. Our predictions can only be fulfilled, it must be warned, at the cost of closing the grades of freedom of the school experiences, what turn them "predictable" environments (Baquero, 2007; Engeström, 2009) organized in a normalized and naturalized way. This is why that the problem of our psycho-educative approach on the "school failure" or the suspicious of "educability" are far from being a psycho "technical" problem. The essay of alternative educational/school experiences will always try, finally, to recover the emancipatory and libertarian possible character of the educational experience, its inevitably political sense.

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CHAPTER 3

SURFACING CONTRADICTIONS AROUND GENDER RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM PRACTICES IN SCIENCE TEACHER EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

Charles Chikunda

Introduction

This chapter opens up a discussion on tensions and contradictions around gender issues in Science, Mathematics and Technical subjects (SMTs) in a teacher education context in Zimbabwe. Like in many other African countries and most parts of the world females tend to shy away from these disciplines and their related professions. This is despite efforts, mostly at policy level, that have been made in almost all the countries to bring about gender equality and equity in these disciplines. In Zimbabwe for instance the National Gender Policy stipulates as one of the strategies of the education and training sector that curriculum should promote and encourage girls to take on science, mathematics and technology at all levels of education (Zimbabwe National Gender Policy, 2004).

Some commentators (e.g. FAWE, 2005, 2008; Kalu, 2005; Chikunda, 2010), argue that although it is now common sense that gender imbalances in SMTs areas exist, teachers in schools however are often unaware or unaccepting of the situation and would not naturally feel the need to address them. This seems to point at the fact that SMTs teachers are graduating from these institutions without adequate skills and knowledge for gender responsive pedagogies. It is for this reason that the chapter focuses on exploring the tensions and contradictions around gender responsive pedagogies in SMTs teacher education.

Teacher training setup in Zimbabwe is best described by three activity systems; the teachers' college as the central activity system, Ministry of Higher Education and the Department of Teacher Education. There are several teacher education institutions throughout the country, however, in this case study the central activity system is a teacher training college that produces secondary school teachers for a broad range of technical subjects namely building technology, mechanical engineering, agriculture, technical graphics and wood technology, clothing and textiles technology, tourism and

hospitality management and information technology in addition to training teachers in Mathematics and traditional Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology).

The Department of Teacher Education (DTE) is in the faculty of education at the University of Zimbabwe, an institution that is mandated to monitor teacher education in the country. It approves syllabi for polytechnics and teachers' colleges through its multiple roles concerning education, research, supervision, and extension courses throughout the country. DTE works in unison with the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry of Higher Education (also known as Head Office (HO)) administers teachers' colleges in the country. The teacher education wing under this ministry, headed by a Director of Teacher Education has as some of the responsibilities: contributes to curriculum development; draws policy decisions from cabinet and other government departments; links regional and international directives with teacher education curriculum. The director is therefore the link person responsible for interpreting both international and national policies on behalf of teacher education. Another dimension was also added to this activity system is that of the gender focal person. The Ministry of Gender appoints a gender focal person to every ministry whose mandate is to spearhead gender mainstreaming in that specific ministry.

Theoretical framework and research Focus

The chapter uses Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (second and third generations) lenses to explore gender responsive pedagogies in teacher education as well as to develop expansive learning towards the same goal. In developing second generation CHAT, Engeström expanded Vygotsky's work to come up with rules, community and division of labour, socio-historical aspects of mediation that were omitted by Vygotsky (Engeström, 1999 in Yamagata-Lynch, 2003). Vygotsky's research was focused more on the semiotic process relation, while Engeström expanded this, locating it in everyday life i.e. situated activities. All the components of activity system, including the top triangle and the bottom socio-historical components, can mediate change not only for the object but for each other. In developing this model, Engeström suggested that (a) the relations between individuals and the object of their activity are mediated by concepts and technologies, (b) the relationships between the community and the overall object of its activity are mediated by its division of labor, and (c) the relations between individuals and the communities, of which they are part, are mediated by rules and procedures, which can be explicit or implicit e.g. cultural 'rules' that govern object of its activity. (Blackler, Crump and Mcdonald, 2000). Daniels (2001) noted that the importance of second generation CHAT was that it brought interrelations between the individual and his/her community into focus. Applying the second generation CHAT enabled me to critically look at each element of the activity system with respect to gender responsiveness in the curriculum. To do this, I identified each component by posing diagnostic questions as shown in Figure 1.

Mediating Tools: What cultural & historical artefacts are in place and being used to support gender responsive curriculum practices in SMTs teacher education?

Subjects: Do teacher educators have sufficient pedagogical knowledge for gender responsive practice? Are teacher educators knowledgeable and engage with gender responsive tool such as gender related policies and gender responsive pedagogy in SMTs? Who is/should be involved incorporating gender in the SMTs teacher education curriculum?

Object: What evidence of gender responsiveness is present in SMTs teacher education curriculum practices?

Outcome: what mediation tools can support gender responsive curriculum practices in SMTs teacher education?

Rules: What cultural-historical norms & rules govern incorporation of gender responsive practices in SMTs teacher education curriculum?

Community: Who else is involved, should be involved & how, in incorporating gender curriculum practices in SMTs teacher education?

Division of labor: Who does what, who should do what & why in incorporating gender curriculum practices in SMTs teacher education?

Figure 1: Diagnostic questions for the teacher education activity system using second generation CHAT. Adapted from Engestrom 1987, 1999.

The third generation CHAT exists when there is more than one activity system of the second generation and there is interaction between the activity systems as described above. In this case, third generation activity theory was necessary to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogues and multiple perspectives around gender responsive curriculum in SMTs interaction of the activity systems.

Contradictions within and between activity systems

In CHAT contradictions are not simply conflicts or problems, but are "historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). I surfaced contradictions within and between three activity systems; teacher education, HO and DTE.

Contradictions in the central activity system

As said above, the Teachers' College was the central activity system. In-depth interviews was the main tool that I used to surface contradictions. Six teacher educators (coded TE1-TE6) participated in the exercise. One of the lead questions that was used

to ascertain teacher educators' level of gender responsiveness was: *Why do you think girls become less and less interested in sciences as they continue with their education*[1]*?* Excerpt 1, summarise some responses:

Excerpt 1 (several teacher educators)

> **TE6**: *Girls perceive them (science and maths) as a male domain.*
> **TE2**: *I don't know why more boys than girls opt for physics ... probably it's a perception that girls have that physics is a male domain.*
> **TE4**: *... looks like females are now willing to take up maths ... girls lack the confidence to take up the challenge... this could be that they look down upon themselves due to stereotypes that act against them (girls) for example gender stereotypic statements such as 'mathsdzinodavarumechaivo' (maths requires real men).*
> **TE3**: *Information Technology is lifelong learning it depends on the character of the person ... females in most cases are not willing to continue learning.*

Such statements reveal a primary contradiction within the subject in that although teacher educators could see gender disparities in terms of enrolment and retention, they did not possess the required tools and analytical lenses to undertake a deeper analysis of the causes of such gender disparities and the implications for girls studying SMTs, nor did they have capacity for working against these in their practice. Various other primary contradictions emerged within the elements of the activity system as shown in Figure 2.

Contradictions within the tools

The study analyzed both conceptual and material tools that could support gender responsive curriculum practices in teacher education. Evidence generated shows no visible engagement with gender related policies and no engagement with research in gender and SMTs education in the activity system. For instance, analysis of documents such as students' assessment projects, syllabi, revealed that there were no institutionally designed tools or mechanisms to engage with gender issues in SMTs, nor was there any evidence of engaging with gender related research in SMTs pedagogies. SMTs teacher education curriculum practices were based on the traditional instrumentalist view of science.

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[1]   The question was designed to assess the level of gender responsiveness of SMTs teacher educators although they do not deal with boys and girls directly in their practice.

Contradictions within rules

The study also looked at the explicit and implicit regulations, norms and conventions (Engeström, 1999, 2001) that could promote or constrain gender responsive curriculum practices in the central activity system. There were written down rules in this activity system such as curriculum review policies, government regulations, examination driven curriculum andDTE policies. Such rules had their impact as far as gender responsive pedagogy is concerned. For instance the teacher educators in Extract 2 below expresses some contradictions based on how these rules are interpreted by teacher educators. As shown in the extract, some teacher educators did not see much room for them to incorporate gender issues into the curriculum because of rigid curriculum regulations.

Extract 2

TE4: *The syllabus is given; there is little room for teachers to come up with their own things.*

TE6: *As I said science content is very factual and is given, there is not much room for interest...we teach facts (meaning science is taught as it is and the teacher can hardly consider learners' interests).*

TE1: *When we teach science we teach science and I do not see sex stereotyping there.*

There were also invisible semiotic mediation properties (Daniels, 2010) that hindered gender responsive curriculum practices in the activity system. For instance it emerged that patriarchal social conditioning with the related habitus and doxa tends to obstruct SMTs teacher educators' viewing of other reasons that may push girls out of sciences apart from their gender identity. Extract 3 below from a focus group interview is testimony to this:

Extract 3

- *girls perceive them (science and maths) as a male domain*
- *they are normally weak in maths and they do not seem to like to put effort*
- *they (girls) are less forthcoming in discussions and in practical activities*
- *they are shy and at times they withdraw to their little circles*
- *I don't know why more boys than girls opt for physics; probably it's a perception that girls have that physics is a male domain*
- *males are more creative, more forthcoming, and adventurous.*

Teacher educators' identity construction of girls as "weak", "putting less effort", "shy", "used to getting things done for them" could emanate from patriarchal perceptions

of women and, in this case, influenced their curriculum practices. Daniels (2012) reminds us that the way in which the social relations of institutions are regulated have cognitive and affective consequences for those who live and work inside them. Unterhalter and North (2011) support this, arguing that gender inequality is deeply imbued in the norms of institutions, their decision-making processes, forms of exercising power, their rules, unwritten cultures, and approaches to allocating resources. My recommendation in this regard is that for successful curriculum re-orientation to occur, there is also need to engage with invisible or implicit mediational properties of institutional structures that shape human thought and action (ibid.), as illuminated by several instances of the same in this chapter.

Instrumentalist views of science and scientism[2] on the part of teacher educators were also identified as having regulatory properties shaping curriculum practices. The utterances in extract 2 are examples which show that some teacher educators saw science as divorced from social issues.

Teacher educators' non-engagement with gender related policies also results in regulatory properties that affect gender responsive curriculum practices. According to Eisner (1985, p. 97)

> Ignorance is not simply a neutral void, it has important effects on the kinds of options one is able to consider, the alternatives that one can examine, and the perspectives from which one can view a situation or a problem.

Similarly, in this case, the lack of knowledge of policy requirements related to curriculum, leads SMTs teachers to fail to implement gender responsive curriculum practices in a gendered context.

Contradictions within the object

Analysis of SMTs teacher education curriculum practices using the data obtained through interviews as discussed above revealed that gender responsive pedagogies were not an object of curriculum practice. Contradictions within the object manifest as secondary contradictions emanating from the tension between two elements of the activity system. As Engeström (2005) said, primary contradiction evolves and takes the form of specific secondary contradictions. In this case, teacher educators' low level of gender awareness (primary contradiction within the subject), as discussed above, led to them failing to practice gender responsive pedagogies in their curriculum. There were

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[2]   "The belief that science is authoritarian, non-humanistic, objective, purely rational and empirical, universal, impersonal, socially sterile and unencumbered by human bias, dogma or cultural values" (Aikenhead, 2002, p. 68).

also other tensions between other elements of the activity system that that clashed with the object for example, tension between the syllabus documents (material tools), that point to the need of incorporating gender issues in the curriculum, and lack of subject's conceptual tools to translate this into curriculum practices, eventually manifest as failure by the subject to practice gender responsive pedagogies. Tensions within the rules discussed above e.g. patriarchal norms will lead to the same effect of the subject failing to implement gender responsive pedagogies (contradiction between subject and object).

Further evidence from data analysis with the help of a critical discourse analytical lens seemed to point at patriarchal socialization of teacher educators (as a rule) as a major contributing factor to their gendered curriculum practices. As discussed above, tacit primary contradictions could be surfaced, that is tension emanating from the teacher educator failing to observe gendered practices in the curriculum because of their own patriarchal socialization. As Engeström (2001) argues contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems. Some teacher educators seem to be heavily influenced by their own patriarchal values in their curriculum practices. For instance, when asked how they equip future teachers to engage with traditional cultural issues such as girls are expected to be obedient, submissive, passive– personality attributes that may not be in accordance with active participation as required in SMTs learning, some replied:

> **TE1:** *Learners should be able to draw the line between culture and academic aspects, when we are in class it's about learning, nothing to do with behaviour at home.*
> **TE5:** *Opportunities towards education for all are there; the fault is theirs (girls) not the system.*
> **TE1:** *Yes ... there are girls who prefer to work with boys (these are **clever girls**)-they have confidence... may want to show the boys that they know just like them ...there are girls who prefer to work in a group of girls only – **the average** and **the weak ones**. On the other hand, boys, whether weak, average or gifted can work with anyone, they don't care much. When they make mistakes they are not very worried ...life goes on, it's an attitude thing.*

Such statements are a typical example of how cultural norms can 'obstruct' people from seeing gender issues in their practice; in fact they act gender blindly unknowingly, hence fail to develop the necessary tools essential for gender responsive curriculum practices. This is a typical example of a primary contradiction evolving into secondary contradiction. It became apparent that there is tension between reproducing/maintaining vs. transformation largely due to patriarchal socialization that result in an attitude that is indifferent to addressing gender issues in the curriculum. This is similar to what Kalu (2005) observed this in Nigeria pointing out that in most African communities, teachers who are central to the transformation of society in general and the school system in particular, are a product of gender constructs in society. Teachers and students alike are socialized in basically patriarchal structures that foster gender inequality, economically,

socially and culturally. She gave examples of gender inequality in most African societies that include attitudes and practices that see women as basically inferior to men, without the right to ownership of the means of production and property. Women are also expected to be subservient to men, leave decision making to men, are taught not to speak out in public, not to be outspoken especially against men and generally to accept the injustices meted out on them by the system without a fight (Kalu, 2005). Elder-Vass (2010) used Bourdieu's concept of habitus to explain this; habitus is a product of history which is both a product of, and produces, individual and collective practices, predisposes the participant to act, think and behave in particular ways. In terms of curriculum practices, the teacher educator's habitus (subject) clashes with gender responsive curriculum practices (object), resulting in a secondary contradiction between subject and object.

It also emerged that even though some teacher educators (subjects) showed a slightly higher level of gender awareness in SMTs education, they however failed to articulate curriculum responses (object) that they use to address such issues. The following is an example of such a secondary contradiction.

> *TE4: This perception [that girls aren't good in SMTs] I think is propagated by teachers themselves, teachers propagate stereotypes, society looks down upon females.*
> *TE3: Males are more creative, more forthcoming, and adventurous– females are not, probably due to socialization ... not that they are dull ...*
> *The same individuals went on to reveal uncoordinated efforts that they bring into their curriculum practices as a way of trying to impart gender responsive pedagogic skills, values and attitudes to trainee teachers. They said:*
> *TE4: I sensitize my own trainee teachers towards this... we always try to make reference to the low involvement of females in math, Teacher Education should try by all means in their practice to motivate girls to join math/sciences.*
> *TE3: We always point it out that they (trainee teachers) should try as much as possible to motivate our girl child out there to join maths/science ... find a way to incentivize girls to participate in sciences e.g. bursaries for tertiary education. Teacher education institutions should bring this issue (impact of patriarchal socialization) to the trainee teachers, make them aware of gender stereotypes... this should be in our methods syllabus but for now we don't talk about cultural issues in science education.*

It is clear from this evidence that although the teacher educators concerned possess an appreciable degree of gender awareness, they are however not translating this awareness into curriculum practice leading into a contradiction between subject and object. The contradictions discussed here demanded that the unit of analysis progress to the third generation of CHAT, in which the object (curriculum practice) of the central activity system had to be analyzed in a network of other activity systems.

Contradictions within, between and among activity systems

As discussed above, a network of activity systems share the common object of teacher education. In order to surface contradictions at this level, I interrogated the institutional engagement with policies related to gender responsive pedagogy in teacher education. The idea was to interrogate why the central activity system is largely ignorant of gender related issues when there are policies in the system and seemingly supporting structures in the form of the two rule and tool making activity systems that could have provided a framework to have such issues incorporated into the SMTs teacher education curriculum.

The entry point for this analysis was to understand the subjects (teacher educators) engagement with the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy. The principal question was: *Do you in any way engage with gender related policies such as the national gender policy in your relations with teacher education curriculum, if so how?* All the teacher educators indicated that they have no idea of such a document and hence there is no college policy on gender responsive pedagogy derived from it. It became evident at this point that cultural tools and artefacts provided for by policies like the National Gender Policy are not permeating into the SMTs teacher education curriculum as intended, resulting in a clash between the object of the central activity system and that of a higher activity system. At this point, the unit of analysis changed from one activity system to a network of activity systems, need then arose of "following the object" across organizational boundaries (Miettinen, 2009, p. 166). In this case, the idea was to investigate on the systemic structures in place to make policy frameworks translatable into curriculum practices. Firstly I had to look into each of the tool and rule making activity systems in relation to gender responsive curriculum practices in teacher education.

Contradictions involving the Department of Teacher Education activity system

Preliminary results indicate the DTE is not ensuring that the gender responsive agenda is integrated into the teacher education curriculum as it is expected to do as an activity system that oversees curriculum development in teacher education. The two interviewees revealed structural tensions within the Department of Teacher Education activity system itself. Firstly the only two female staff members agreed to take part in the study. They narrated their gender concerns in the curriculum as follows:

> **DT1:** *Gender issues are always explosive and involve lot of emotions... it is a challenge really because it talks about norms that may go against cultural and religious beliefs.*

DT2: *It is not easy, each time we talk of gender issues ... we are referred to as Beijing[3]and everything is left to us. I really point out this with my students but I am not sure how widespread this is in the department ... probably male lecturers don't talk about gender issue at all because you will be shooting yourself in the foot.*

It is evident from this excerpt that anything to do with gender was relegated the responsibility of two female officials out of a staff complement of 13. It appeared thus that gender issues are treated as a peripheral concern left to the two female educators. The underlying mechanism and historical explanation for this could be patriarchy, both as a culture and as an ideology that permeates curriculum practice. The two were kin to incorporate gender into the teacher education curriculum. However, curriculum development in this regard was not happening simply because most of the teacher educators did not see this as really worthwhile. This was due to the tensions within and between subjects. The majority of subjects lack the required tools, either in the form of lack of knowledge or negative attitude. This lead to a primary contradiction evolving into a secondary contradiction (clash between subject and object) or as it were, tension between the intended and the actual outcomes. The final result was that this tool and rule making activity system failed to provide the much needed curriculum tools and/or rules to the teacher education activity system to support gender responsive pedagogy. Table 1 summarises some of the contradictions in the DTE activity system. Contradictions that inhibit this activity system from playing its agential role to equip and constantly replenish the teacher education curriculum with necessary tools for gender responsive pedagogies.

Table 1: Summary of secondary contradictions in the Department of Teacher Education activity system.

Secondary Contradiction	Obstacle (cultural-historical context)	Tertiary Contradiction
Between rules and subjects	Patriarchal values vs. incorporating gender issues in curriculum	Between objects (DTE gender blind curriculum development vs. gender responsive curriculum practices).
Between division of labor and objects	All gender related issues relegated to the two female staff members vs. major curriculum transformation of incorporating gender issues in SMTs teacher education	Between object (DTE gender blind curriculum development vs. tools for gender responsive practices in teacher education).
Between subject and object	Lack of gender related curriculum tools vs. the need to come up with such tools for teacher education curriculum development	Between object (DTE gender blind curriculum development vs. tools for gender responsive curriculum practices in teacher education).

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[3]   Referring to the World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

Contradictions within the Ministry of Higher Education activity system

Tensions and contradictions involving the HO activity system emanated from the supposition that teacher educators are able to access policy imperatives and translate them into curriculum practice (see expansive learning below). The assumption sharply contradicted the situation in the central activity system as discussed above. One teacher educator raised that "if the policy is there, surely someone should inform us of the existence of such a policy or the need to incorporate emerging issues into the curriculum and it is reasonable for policy makers to come up with some implementing programMme". This was a sign of a tertiary contradiction, a clash between the object of this tool/rule making activity system and that of the teacher education activity system. As with the case of DTE, the clash emerges in that HO as a tool and rule making activity system is not taking it as its object(ive) to provide the teacher education activity system with the required tools that are needed to make their curriculum practices gender responsive.

The gender focal person who operates under the same ministry also confirmed the lack of collegiality in the ministry. She concurs that she runs her own workshops: "there are so many colleges for one person, fourteen of them in the country and I am all by myself". The implication is that the gender into teacher education agenda is not happening fast enough because the workload is too much for one person. A primary contradiction within the division of labor in this activity system is visible here. This contradiction evolves into a tertiary contradiction in that the tool making activity system fails to provide teacher education with the necessary tools for incorporating gender issues in the curriculum. The clash is between the division of labor of the tool making activity system and the tools element of the teacher education activity system.

Conclusion

Gender responsive pedagogy in SMTS in zimbabwe remains an illusion. This is despite numerous efforts at policy level to redress the situation. Contradictions surfaced in this study are some of the reasons why policy is not being translated into curriculum practice. SMTS teachers leave teacher training without being exposed to adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and norms for gender responsive pedagogy.

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CHAPTER 4

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE ACTIVITY OF LEARNING TO TEACH ENGLISH IN CHILE

Malba Barahona

Introduction

Recent research in SLTE[1] has demonstrated that teachers' learning is a complex process that comprises the pedagogical understanding of language teaching and learning together with the necessary socialisation that teachers go through at schools as part of their training. The emergence of school-university partnerships in SLTE is a relatively recent development in teacher education, especially in Chile. School-university partnerships were only introduced as compulsory requirements for teacher education programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s, following education reform demands in developed countries such as the USA and UK (Tsui, Edwards, Lopez-Real, & Kwan, 2009). Today, teacher education programs include sequential school-based experiences throughout the duration of the program. The implementation of this reform has presented a significant number of challenges and added an additional layer of complexity of the activity of learning to teach EFL in Chile.

In order to understand some of the challenges of school-university partnerships in teachers' learning, this paper reports on a case study that examined the contradictions that emerged around the activity of learning to teach EFL in a SLTE program in Chile. In this study which followed a CHAT framework, teacher learning was understood as a situated activity. This implied the need to consider the specific context of learning that took place in Chile, in a specific teacher education program and primarily in two settings: at the schools where practicums where undertaken and at the university. Secondly, teacher learning is understood as a social activity, meaning that participating

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[1]   Second Language Teacher Education

and interacting in a community shapes teachers' learning. Thirdly, teachers' learning is seen as a mediated activity - that is cultural and physical tools shape teachers' learning. And fourthly, teachers' learning is a dialectic process which comprises inherent contradictions. This concept of contradictions is drawn from Activity Theory which sees contradictions as disturbances that have the potential for transformation in the activity (Issroff & Scanlon, 2002). Contradictions were apparent in the data and its analysis illuminates the mutual constitutive planes of the learning activity and their potential expansive use for improvement of SLTE. This paper will demonstrate specifically how such contradictions became apparent at various planes of the analysis: the national context, the EFL[2] teacher education program and the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers.

What are contradictions?

The notion of contradictions is a key tenet of Activity Theory. Contradictions are inherent of any activity system and are manifested through tensions or conflicts within the elements of the activity (subject, tool, division of labour, community) or between activity systems (different objects) (Foot, K., & Groleau, C., 2011). As Engeström's observes, contradictions are "historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems" (Engeström, 1999, p. 4). This means that contradictions are not just problems or misalignments between the components of the activity, but conflicts that have been constructed historically, that have shaped not only one activity, but the whole system, and that characterise the nature of an activity system as dynamic.

The analysis of contradictions reflects the dialectic nature of an activity system. The dual nature of the activity is given as the society/collective and the specific individual are mutually constitutive part of the activity (Roth & Radford, 2011). For example, in this study, the focus has been on the activity of learning to teach EFL in a specific teacher education program in Chile, both the collective and the personal lived experiences of pre-service teachers have been analysed as part of the activity. Contradictions have emerged in this context of the university coursework and the schools.

Contradictions exist at different levels. They come in four types (Engeström, 1987). Primary contradictions exist within each constituent component of an activity system; secondary contradictions are found between the constituents; tertiary contradictions oppose the object of the dominant activity with the object of a culturally more advanced

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[2]   English as a Foreign Language

activity; and quaternary contradictions exist between each entity of the dominant activity and the neighbouring activities (Roth et al., 2004). In this study, I have identified the four types of contradictions within these domins. However, the primary and secondary type contradictions were more prominent. Primary contradictions within pre-service teachers 'learning were manifested through their reflections on the dissonance between their conceptualisations of language teaching and the classroom reality. The secondary contradictions that were identified from the data were between pre-service teachers and the teacher educators in relation to the object of the activity, between pre-service teachers and their tools (the curriculum and the practicum), between pre-service teachers and division of labour. Tertiary contradictions were identified as pre-service teachers intended to work as teachers at schools, but the teacher educators wanted them to be social agents. The most revealing contradictions identified were between the two activity settings: the school, and the university. The two activities were competing all the time in relation to the object and the data showed how pre-service teachers crossed the boundaries between them.

Another reason why it is relevant to identify and analyse contradictions in an activity system, is because they can be the force that drives change in the activity. In Engeström's expansive learning cycle, when participants become aware of the contradictions of the activity and they collectively decide on a plan to transform the activity, disturbances become the force that leads to change (Engeström, 1999). This change is not only an individual transformation, but a collective endeavour in which the whole activity is subject to transformation and being transformed. As Smagorinsky et al. observe, contradictions that lead to change "require a socially contextualized intellectual resolution" (2004, p. 22). Despite the potential of contradictions to change and transform the activity system, this transformation does not always happen. In fact, it can either enable the change or disable it. This is dependent on whether contradictions are identified, acknowledged and resolved among participants of the activity (Nelson, 2002). As this study was not an intervention, as well as institutional and time constraints, the participants did not make a collective decision to transform the activity. Notwithstanding, the findings of this study can be used as a first step for the studied teacher education program not only to reflect on how to improve the activity of learning to teach EFL, but also to transform it.

The study

Purpose

The study reported here discusses critical findings of my PhD research project: Understanding *EFL teacher education in Chile: A CHAT perspective*. The study focused on how a group of 24 late stage Chilean pre-service teachers of English learnt to teach English in a university teacher education program in Chile. It is important to note that my research is not part of an interventionist approach such as *Change Laboratories* by Engeström (2001). In fact, I have taken the route of other researchers who use contradictions as a conceptual framework to guide data collection and analysis (Groleau et al., 2011) to heuristically understand how a group of pre-service teachers learnt to teach EFL traversing from the university to the classroom setting.

Research questions and Methods

The research study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What tensions and contradictions emerge in the school-university partnership?

2. How does CHAT illuminate the complex dialectical interplay between EFL pre-service teachers and the sociocultural context that shape how they learn to teach EFL?

To answer these questions, a qualitative research design was adopted. The design of this research reflects the perspective of CHAT as a conceptual framework which allows us to understand the complex activity of learning to teach EFL illuminating the contradictions of the activity as it reveals the dialectic nature of learning.

Data were collected in the settings of the activity of learning to teach in a Chilean SLTE program including the schools where pre-service teachers were undertaking their practicum. The data collection process was undertaken over a twelve week period in 2011.

Table 1 below summarises the specific data collection methods.

Table 1: Summary data collection methods.

Data collection methods	Artefacts/participants
Interviews	Final stage pre-service teachers (S1-15_I), head of the SLTE program (H1-I), teacher educators (TE1-8-I), and teacher mentors (TM1-4-I)
Observations and follow up interviews	Pre-service teachers at the schools (Field notes 1-10) and at discussion seminar sessions (Field notes U-8)
Self-reflection reports	Pre-service teachers' reflections on the practicum (S1-24-R)
Documents	National policy for teachers, curriculum, history, accreditation criteria
Group Discussion	Pre-service teachers' discussion on the practicum (GD)
The researcher	Observer-as-participant

Context of the study

The institutional context

The study took place in a SLTE program in a young private university in Santiago. The program investigated had an enrolment of 300 pre-service teachers in five different years when the data were collected. The research reported here focused on fifth year pre-service teachers because at that stage, they had already been in the program for four years, and in this final year they were completing their last teaching practice and action research project.

Participants

Pre-service teachers: These students enrolled in the program in either 2007 or 2008. The average age of the group was 21 years old and it was female dominated (with only 4 male participants). They were to become the second generation of graduates of the program. Most of the pre-service teachers came from low-middle socio-economic backgrounds and came from public or subsidised schools. Their entry level of English to the program was elementary.

Teacher educators: Eight teachers were interviewed from different disciplines (English, linguistics, practicum supervisors, reflection seminars, and assessment) who

had worked in the program for at least two years. Most of these teacher educators held a Master's degree and were experienced language teachers. These teacher educators showed a generally high level of commitment with the program.

Teacher mentors: Four school teachers were interviewed. These four teachers were female teacher mentors that worked with the pre-service teachers during their practicum. The average age of this group was 40 years old.

Settings: the activity of learning to teach EFL took place mainly at two different settings: schools and the university teacher education program. Pre-service teachers attended the different courses that were part of the teacher education program. The program is part of the Faculty of Education in a private university. The schools in which pre-service teachers completed the school-based experiences comprised a wide range of schools, from public to private schools across Santiago. These two settings imposed different challenges for pre-service teachers who had to move from the university to schools and vice versa. The data revealed tensions between the schools and university's views regarding pre-service teachers' expectations as teachers.

Data Analysis

Two strategies were used for the data analysis. Firstly, the data were thematically coded. The data were analysed identifying primary codes. The codes identified in the data were grouped into themes. After reading the different data sources several times, words, sentences, and paragraphs were further coded and categorised. Secondly, themes were developed to most effectively capture the activity of learning to teach EFL. Following this coding, activity theory categories (subject, object, tools, rules, community division of labour and contradictions) were used to illuminate these themes. Thirdly, drawing on the work of Engeström and Sannino (2011), contractions were identified in participants' discourse and behaviour which revealed manifestations of contradictions (e.g. dilemmas, tensions, paradoxes). Finally, Engeström's third generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001) was used to illustrate the complexity and inherent contradictions of the activity (see Figure 1 in section 5).
The table below summarises the main contradictions identified in this study.

Table 2: Contradictions in the activity of learning to teach EFL in Chile.

Contradiction level	Observations from the study
Collective/national level	Between the national curriculum, national policy for teacher education and the SLTE program studied
Primary contradictions/individual	Individual pre-service conceptualisations of language teaching and learning are not aligned with the actual classroom reality.
Secondary contradictions/collective at the teacher education program or at the school	Pre-service teachers and the teacher educators. Pre-service teachers and the tools: the curriculum and the practicum
Tertiary contradictions /collective In relation to the object of the study	Between pre-service teachers, teacher educators and teacher mentors' views of teaching
Quaternary contradictions/collective- between the school and university settings	Between the two activity settings: the school, and at the university.

Results and discussion

Pre-service teachers' inner contradictions

This section presents the primary contradictions identified in the data analysis. In this case, the analysis showed pre-service teachers' inner conflicts between their beliefs about language teaching and learning and the classroom reality they faced at the practicum. Four categories emerged in the data analysis, which corresponded to strong pre-service teachers' beliefs about their role as teachers and language teaching and learning. The categories were: English as the means of classroom communication and instruction, communication versus grammar-oriented classes; a learner centred approach; a teacher as a social change agent. These will now be discussed individually in more detail.

a) English as the means of classroom communication and instruction

The following comment from pre-service teacher 5 reflects her conflict between using English in the classroom and the frustration it may cause to children. Her conflict reveals that teaching English in English could be problematic, but also that there can be opportunities of adjustment and change.

I am also doubtful, because our goal is teaching English in English, but I don't know what it is going to be like, so when I go to the school and see the school reality I don't know if I'll have to modify something or not. Well, speaking Spanish instead of English. Because the students don't understand and I have seen how children get sulked when they don't understand, and then they don't want to learn any longer. (S5-I1)

One of the assumptions of the Chilean Ministry of Education, also supported by the teacher education program studied, is that teachers do not use English in the classroom because they do not have a competent level of English (Ministerio de Educación, 2009). Although recent results of national tests of teachers confirm this, in the case of the pre-service teachers in this study, it was a different story. Some pre-service teachers with a very good command of English were doubtful or struggled to use English in the classroom. The reason was not their lack of proficiency, but other classroom constraints. For example, in the case of pre-service teacher 5, she was very fluent and competent in English, and although she manifested her intent to use English as the means of instruction she used English and Spanish in the classroom.

*Pre-service teacher 5 gave instructions to students, **the explanations she used were first English and then in Spanish.** When students asked for confirmation checks in Spanish, she would use English first, and immediately after she would switch into Spanish. Students always used Spanish unless she pushed them to repeat a sentence or word in English (Field note 5.1).*

In a follow-up interview, this pre-service teacher justified her use of Spanish as a transition before she spoke only English in the class. She said that it was one way to make students feel more confident and that in that way students would not feel frustrated because they did not understand, and that little by little she will speak only English. By the end of the practicum, this teacher was asked if she had been able to use only English in the classroom, and she said that was not possible as students did not understand enough. The case of pre-service teacher 5 was not uncommon in the data. Indeed, most pre-service teachers had a very advanced command of English, and however they did not use English because of pedagogical reasons.

***I have tried to use as much English as possible in my classes. However, I still haven't been able to do it completely.** To avoid using Spanish, I do mimicry and drawings to explain the meaning of words, until one student guesses the meaning and says the word in Spanish. I get really tired, and frustrated because the next class they don't remember the meaning of the word, it makes me wonder if I should continue speaking English all the time. (S3_I1)*

Pre-service teacher 3's observation, above, is another example of how conflicted some pre-service teachers were regarding the use of English in the classroom. Yet at the same time it reveals the potentiality of expansive learning. This means that this disturbance could have become an opportunity for learning as it motivated pre-service teachers to confront the conflict and find different pedagogic tools. Some pre-service teachers resolved the conflict discussing these issues with their tutors to find appropriate methodological strategies to use in their lessons. Some others were unaware of the conflict and did not face it at all.

While the majority of pre-service teachers in the study had a high level of English competence, a few pre-service teachers reported that their level of English could be the cause that impeded them to use English in the class. This finding is aligned with Ahn's study (2011) in which Korean pre-service teachers having a native like proficiency of English had difficulties using English as the means of instruction in their lessons. This author explained this as the result of "contextual constraints related to the practicum and the socialization patterns of pupils in school" (p. 253).

b) Communication versus grammar oriented classes

As pre-service teachers engaged in the activity of learning to teach English in schools, they connected their beliefs with theory and practical applications in the school context. Pre-service teachers' discourse regarding language teaching and learning revealed clear assumptions about how English should be taught. They repeated that the focus of the English lesson is not grammar and that a communicative approach should be used. The following observation is an example of how pre-service teachers developed concepts shaped by their learning experiences and theoretical constructs.

> *At first it didn't make much sense to me because we were taught things like the communicative approach and I thought, "**OK, but how do I teach the language? How?" and it didn't make sense to me until last semester, when we were told things like** "no, you don't have to teach grammar, you have to teach, I don't know, vocabulary in context". Then it made a lot of sense and I hadn't noticed it until then. It was like "take in all of this" and **I learned English that way because grammar and those things don't help you speak.** Then one does like babies do, repeating and borrowing phrases (S8_I1)*

Pre-service teachers' perspectives not only reflect their views regarding language teaching and learning, but also how they are forming their concepts about language teaching and learning. From the beliefs they brought with them to the program from their past experiences, to the new university context, and back to school again. Apprenticeship of observation is one way to explain the origin of the underpinning

reason of teachers' practice, but it does not look about the changes, about how these pre-service teachers endured and changed, and adapted to the new contexts.

The contradiction within pre-service teachers emerged in terms of resources of instructional activities. Despite pre-service teachers' intentions for more frequent use of communicative tasks, rather than grammar oriented activities, some pre-service teachers not only struggled with the implementation, but ended up accommodating to the school or teacher mentor's style, using the textbook mainly and following traditional grammar oriented tasks. This perception was shared by a significant proportion of the cohort.

> *I did not have the opportunity to implement a communicative approach.* ***Once I tried to do it, but my mentor teacher immediately told me that I would better explain the tense with all the conjugations, because they will get lost. Thinking honestly, yes, they will get lost, because the way I teach is not the way they assess.*** *So I could not take the opportunity to make wonderful classes. Instead, I used the never-ending grammar method (S24-R)*

c) A learner-centred approach versus managing the classroom

Most pre-service teachers manifested their intention to teach learner-centred classes. However, they struggled with classroom management and in a significant number of cases, pre-service teachers tended to focus on controlling the class rather than on trying to promote autonomous learning. In addition, students' lack of motivation and participation in the classroom reinforced pre-service teachers' perception of learners and justified a teacher-controlled instructional practice. As one pre-service teacher reported, she felt frustrated of trying to use a learner-centred approach as things in her classroom get "messy".

> *Another weakness I have is that sometimes I feel frustrated because of the recommendation: not to give a teacher-centred class. But from my point of view,* ***it is difficult to have learner centred activities in my class because the students are not used to interact with each other. Every time I make them interact they don't know how and they make a mess out of the activity*** *(S26_R1).*

d) A teacher as a social change agent versus a teacher of English.

Pre-service teachers reported that learning to be a teacher was confronting and challenging. As pre-service teachers engaged more and more in the actual activity of teaching, their beliefs were reshaped in the light of the school reality. At the beginning

of the semester, many of the pre-service teachers reported their idea of a teacher as a change agent. Pre-service teacher 2, for example, expressed his strong commitment to make a difference as a teacher. Later this same interviewee reflected on the complexities of being a teacher and how the school experience has made him think about teachers' work and if he really wanted to do that.

> I won't be a messiah for these kids, not at all, but I don't know, **I want to plant a seed, as many teachers did with me** (S2_I1) (before the practicum) (After the practicum) **Teaching English is complex and complicated**. Now I know I can teach, but **I don't know if I want to do this for the rest of my life**. Sometimes it seems a bit futile. (S2_R)

The beliefs of themselves as teachers changed as they engaged in actual teaching in their practicum. A strong component of their teacher identity, especially at the beginning of the practicum, included concepts related about practical skills, rather than making a difference in society. The reports of their practicum showed that pre-service teachers understood that mastering teaching skills such as giving instructions, voice projection, use of whiteboard and classroom management skills were key to be good teachers. They became aware that if they were not able to manage the class, their ideas about making a difference was inapplicable. The following observation was made when this pre-service teacher had finished her practicum. Her ideas of being a teacher and teaching had changed in the school context.

> I think that my best lessons have been with them because I do not have problems with classroom management inside of the classroom, **they enjoy my lessons and one of the best things about this is that they love to participate in class.** Therefore, what I always expect for my lessons work out well and at the end of the class **I feel happy because students and I have fun**. (S4_R)

The analysis here has shown pre-service teachers' inner conflict between their own conceptualisations about language teaching and learning, the school curriculum, and what is expected from them at schools and at university. How did they resolve this conflict? There is not a single answer. Each school offered different challenges to pre-service teachers and in some cases they were not aware of the contradictions, or they decided to accommodate themselves in order to avoid conflict, or to comply with what was expected from them.

Secondary contradictions

Secondary contradictions are the disturbances between the different components (subjects, community, and division of labour, tools) of the activity. According to CHAT, these types of contradictions can be the source of change of the activity. The analysis suggested multiple secondary contradictions. These occurred between (1) pre-service teachers and teacher educators, (2) pre-service teachers and school teachers, (3) pre-service teachers and the curriculum, (4) pre-service teachers and the practicum and (5) pre-service teachers and expectations.

(1) Pre-service teachers and teacher educators

The first clear secondary contradiction identified in the data occurred between pre-service teachers and teacher educators regarding their views of the type of teacher the student teacher was aiming to be. On one hand, most teacher educators expected their graduates to be heroes and almost expected the impossible so that they could change the school reality. On the other hand, though most pre-service teachers showed a strong social commitment, they were also aware that they could not change everything. The school reality presented a complexity with different layers, some of which the teacher educators were unaware. Though most teacher educators of the program had worked at schools in their careers, they had not done it for a long time. Therefore, in a significant number, they were disconnected of the everydayness of school reality.

Pre-service teachers commented that although their university teachers have been capable and supportive, they would have liked to have a stronger guidance from them regarding *teaching English*.

> **The practicum experience could be improved if we had had tutors that had actually taught at schools and that they know the Chilean context** *so that they could contribute with ideas, and activities that work in Chilean schools. Tutors who could give us tips and strategies about how to deal with problems in Chile and neither in England nor USA. (Group interview, May 12, 2011)*

(2) Pre-service teachers and school teachers

Another secondary contradiction identified was between pre-service teachers and school teachers regarding the knowledge and skills a teacher of English should have. As discussed in the previous section, pre-service teachers wanted to teach English in English, teach communicatively, be learner centred and educate good citizens. However at schools, the school-teachers interviewed identified that a good teacher of English

should be able to adapt to the school reality. As reported by pre-service teachers, for most school teachers the use of English, and communicative tasks were not necessarily important, but classroom management and other attributes. Though the following observation from mentor teacher 2 reflects a strong view about what he expected from pre-service teachers, most other teacher mentors were ambivalent.

> *I'm really interested in the teacher's creativity. I think creativity is necessary if they want to do something new, to make the difference, not to do the same old stuff. **That is something that really interests me.** There are some students from other universities that hand in their lesson plans after the classes are done. **I don't like it because when I receive the plans there is nothing I can do about them**, the class is already done and we are late for the next one and it's the same process over and over again, and that is not the idea. **But it's very important to me that the students are always impeccable dressed, and how they mark the difference between them and their students.** They can be 23 or 24 years old, but they are the teachers, they have to feel they are the teachers and have to be able to mark the difference.......**The student doing her practicum is a teacher;** she is not of her students' age. So, it's very important that the guys and girls feel she is an authority and she has the same right ... Those are the things I'm interested in: **good appearance, creativity, and teacher empowermen**t. (TM1-I1)*

At schools, regarding teaching English, pre-service teachers had different experiences. Few experienced having teacher mentors with similar views regarding teaching English in English, and communicatively. Most pre-service teachers had different and opposing views of teaching to their teacher mentors. The resolution of the contradictions was that some pre-service teachers adopted the teacher mentor's style, some others decided to find a midway, doing some of their own activities, and in some cases doing what the teacher mentor had suggested. Some others resisted, and opposed the teacher educator's views, and tried to do what they thought was right. In two cases, this ended in breakdown of the relationship, and they had to be changed to other teachers, or other schools.

(3) Pre-service teachers and the EFL teacher education curriculum

Contradictions or tensions regarding the curriculum are given by on one hand the program goals, the course structure, and pre-service teachers' experience in the course. The written curriculum of the teacher education program showed a strong orientation towards the training of a teacher as a social agent. Though there is a generalised discourse among the participants that English is a vehicle that would allow future

teachers to educate good and responsible Chilean citizens, the course structure has a big focus on the acquisition of English. The inherent contradiction emerges on one hand as pre-service teachers' entry level of English to the program is low. And on the other, it responds to a national need, in which teachers of English need to improve their level.

English as the subject of teaching brings significant challenges, especially in a context in which English is learnt as a foreign language. The program dealt with the imperative about English providing pre-service teachers with almost an immersion of pre-service teachers into an intensive two years of English. This aspect is very specific of SLTE in and EFL context, as English is the object of study, and also the medium of communication in the classroom. English being so predominant in the course structure caused tensions among pre-service teachers and teacher educators. Pre-service teachers were under pressure of learning the language and develop their skills at an advanced level. Teacher educators reported that they were aware of the pressure and they strongly believed that being proficient in the language was a must for a teacher of English. Therefore, the heavy academic load was necessary. Conversely, pre-service teachers reported that the academic load was excessive and not necessarily justified.

Another apparent tension suggested by the data analysis is the relationship between pre-service teachers and the *critical thinking approach* of the curriculum. There is a very strong discourse about how the course structure promotes critical thinking, and how this is a key characteristic of their graduates. In the interviews, some pre-service teachers were very critical of this imperative. They manifested their scepticism regarding how critical they could actually be at the program. They said that every time they exercised their agency and criticised the program, they would be *in trouble*. This reflects the contradictory nature of instructing future teachers as critical thinkers, but being unhappy because they were critical about the program. Though in the program a positive learning atmosphere was in evidence, the relationship between teacher educators and pre-service teachers was vertical and the division of labour was highly stratified, with pre-service teachers the last to have a voice in the program. The tension was manifested in the data in different examples: pre-service teachers' criticised teacher educators as incoherent and inconsistent, pre-service teachers' criticised school teachers, pre-service teachers criticised the course structure.

The written curriculum of the program states that the curriculum is orientated to an experiential development process. School based experiences' objectives are written with those underpinning principles. However, how participants conceptualise the nature of learning to teach not surprisingly differs from the written curriculum. Teacher educators expected that pre-service teachers transferred the knowledge learnt at university to the schools.

Pre-service teachers struggled with the school reality, as their first encounters with schools, in a significant number was confronting. At one level, it was expected that they could understand the school reality and act upon it at the same time. Yet at another more instrumental level, many pre-service teachers had to find ways to accommodate to the school reality and in several cases do their best to survive. From the data analysed, the school-based experience learning became a hybrid space of transfer of knowledge and teaching skills development.

Another evident tension in the data is related to the academic load of the course structure, especially in relation to the balance of work between the course and the school-based experiences. From third-year onwards, the course included school-based experiences, and the academic load increased in approximately 20 hours a week for pre-service teachers. This reality caused significant tension amongst pre-service teachers. The conflict aroused as pre-service teachers reported that they lacked time to do the work at the schools and the work at the university satisfactorily. As pre-service teacher 4 reports, the course structure seemed unbalanced and unrealistic.

> *Another thing is the relationship between the teaching practice experiences and the subjects we have at uni. In the first two years we had like four or five subjects. It was relaxing. We started third year, and we had classes on Mon, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 to 6 and on Tuesdays and Thursday we had to go to the schools to do our teaching practice.... **Our academic load was too heavy.** It changed heaps from one year to the next. In fact, few students failed in third year **because they were not able to cope with all the pressure**. **The teaching practice is exhausting, third year is really hard. It is impossible to do everything well.** (S4-I1)*

In this section, I have reported on the most prominent contradictions of the activity of learning to teach at the education program level. However, the most apparent contradictions in the data relate to the trajectory of pre-service teachers between school and university and vice versa at the moment of the practicum. Pre-service teachers, as subjects in becoming teachers, exercised their agency as teachers at school. As pre-service teachers enacted their agency in both the school and university

contexts, they expanded their learning possibilities. They crossed borders of the school and university. They dealt with the community, and rules, of different settings. They moved from the university to the school trying to understand how the school system worked and also trying to make changes.

The contradictions that relate to the practicum and how pre-service teachers crossed boundaries between the school and university are explored in detail in the following section.

(4) Contradictions between school and university expectations

The expectations towards the teaching of English at schools is marked by four aspects: there is an emphasis mainly on teaching English with communicative purposes, the use of English as the means of instruction and communication in the classroom, and lastly that the class is structured following a PPP structure[3]. These aspects were predominant in the discourse of the documents analysed and also reported by the participants. The origin of this has to do with the traditional classes of English in Chile, in which English was taught using Spanish as the means of instruction and the means of communication in the classroom. Repeatedly, pre-service teachers had been taught in different subjects and told the importance of not using Spanish in the classroom by their teacher educators. As discussed in the previous sections, pre-service teachers questioned the rule and reflected on their own classroom realities and the use of Spanish. This questioning caused tension, because this contradicted their teacher educators' expectations.

Similarly, another tension emerges around by the focus of the class. Pre-service teachers were taught that the appropriate focus of an English class is not grammar. They were instructed in the use of a communicative approach. As the Chilean curriculum is focused on the acquisition of skills, they were taught how to teach listening, speaking, writing and reading, with a PPP model. There is a strong common discourse that pre-service teachers should structure their lessons in this way. Therefore, their lesson plans and resulting lessons should follow that structure. This is also a cause of tension at schools, as at schools (although there is a national curriculum to follow) how schools enact that curriculum varies considerably. Grammar is still a preferred focus in the school English lessons classrooms; school teachers have their own ways to structure the lessons causing further conflict.

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[3]   Although pre-service teachers of this study have been trained to use the PPP method according to Harmer (2009), this teaching strategy dates back to the mid 20th century when PPP became the preferred teaching sequence for structural methods (Criado, 2013). It consists of presentation, practice and production.

(5) Pre-service teachers and the practicum

The school setting required different roles, tasks and expectations to be fulfilled. Conflicting roles as students at universities and teachers at the same time became more apparent during the practicum. Both roles were very demanding, and put enormous pressure on pre-service teachers. Pre-service teacher 15 below reflects on how hard for it was to fulfil the two roles. Her observation also reflects her commitment towards teaching and her self-image as a teacher.

> **I want to prepare good worksheets, I want to plan,** I want to care about teaching, but I have to read 10 texts for University **(S15, I1)**

In some cases, pre-service teachers were considered students at schools, and were not given power to make decisions over the curriculum, or assessment. Conversely, they were expected to behave and act as teachers in the classroom. Teacher mentors commented that the main weakness that pre-service teachers showed was their lack of flexibility to adapt them to school reality. Teacher mentors expected that pre-service teachers knew how to act in all different situations they faced as teachers.

Pre-service teachers' identity as teachers contrasted with the teacher educators' view of pre-service teachers as students. Pre-service teachers did most of the job as a full time teacher, preparing lessons, tests, material and also teaching. Their students saw them as teachers and treated them as such; however, university teachers did not necessarily share this view. In this regard, though most teacher educators said in the interviews that pre-service teachers were colleagues, and that their role was accompanying them in this journey, they had very clear expectations of what they had to do, and how they had to be as teachers. Their actions were very directive towards pre-service teachers. In several cases, some teacher educators did not listen to what was happening at schools, instead imposing their views on what pre-service teachers' tasks were meant to be. This led to another level of contradictions: tertiary contradictions.

Tertiary Contradictions

As discussed at the beginning of the paper, tertiary contradictions appear between a culturally more advanced form of the activity in question and the dominant or older form of activity (Engeström 1987). In this study, tertiary contradictions appeared mainly in two situations. First, as was discussed above, when teacher educators imposed their views of teaching over pre-service teachers, and in the end, pre-service teachers were forced to follow a specific type of method in their classes. For example, teacher educator 8 demanded that pre-service teacher under her supervision planned their lessons according to a PPP structure. She checked that on paper, and also when she observed the pre-service teacher teaching.

> *I ask them to write their lesson plans step by step. The first stage helps them clarify their ideas - what they want to do first, in the middle, at the end. I know lesson plans are hard work, but they have to learn how to do it. In our meetings, sometimes, they tell me that the school-teacher doesn't want them to follow that structure, but I insist **they have to do it; they have to be able to teach that way. (TE8_I1)***

The other example of tertiary contradictions identified in the data is as pre-service teachers wanted to teach English to their students as a vehicle to know the world, and the school curriculum or school-teachers imposed their views on teaching. In most schools where pre-service teachers undertook their practicum, the dominant way of teaching English was through grammatical rules. Pre-service teacher 14 quote reflects the conflict when she tried to implement a more communicative approach to her teaching and how this is blocked through the school assessment.

> *My students were learning how to communicate in English, but in the end, it didn't matter. **They had to be able to fill in the gaps with some grammatical tenses**. I had to teach them what I was told so that they scored well in the exams. (S14_I1)*

As seen in these examples, contradictions in the practicum are given for an apparent misalignment between the views of teaching and learning English between the school and university. This causes contradictions regarding not only what or how to teach, but also regarding roles, and tasks that pre-service teachers were meant to do. The next section is devoted to elaborate on the contradictions outlined earlier between the two activity settings: learning to teach EFL at the school versus learning to teach EFL at the university. Understanding the contradictions between the school and university are crucial to have a holistic view of how pre-service teachers learnt to teach English. Pre-service teachers

transited between these two settings. The data suggested that there was not a shared object, and that in some aspects the views about teaching and learning were conflicting.

Quaternary Contradictions: tensions between the school and university settings

By examining the activity system, it becomes apparent that the activities are directed to different objects. As discussed earlier, pre-service teachers in this study had different motives at school compared to school teacher mentors, and university educators. Pre-service teachers were engaged in the activity as part of a compulsory task in the teacher education program. At schools they had to adapt themselves to the school culture and the demands they had to respond to as teachers of English. They were interested in learning practical teaching skills that would allow them to act as teachers. On the other hand, school-teacher mentors wanted fully formed teachers who could control students, and instruct them accordingly to the school curriculum. Conversely, teacher educators wanted that pre-service teachers could positively influence the school culture going beyond traditional teaching practices. This reveals that the objects were not aligned.

Inevitably, the misalignment between the object of the activity created several contradictions. These contradictions included disagreements about: (a) learnings at the practicum; (b) overwhelming responsibilities and expectations required of pre-service teachers; (c) approaches to teaching English that did not fit into classroom practices:

  a) learnings at the practicum; The practicum as it was described by the corresponding course outline says that "pre-service teachers should be able to use all of what has been learnt and developed in the teacher education program demonstrating English proficiency and to know how to teach it" (Practicum Syllabus, description). Furthermore, the aim of the practicum states that pre-service teachers will be able to "to design and implement lesson plans suitable to the corresponding content demonstrating an appropriate level of English, appropriate use of pedagogic strategies, classroom management and critical thinking skills". This suggests that it is expected that pre-service teachers transferred the knowledge and skills provided by the course structure into the school reality. This view is coherent with the teacher educators' interviewed. They were very emphatic about the practicum as a consolidation moment in which pre-service teachers had to demonstrate knowledge and skills. This view was very different from pre-service teachers who signalled practical teaching skills as the main learning in their practicum. Giving instructions, stating classroom rules

or using the board properly are examples of skills reported by pre-service teachers. Classroom management and class methodology were signalled as the most prominent learning in the practicum. Pre-service teachers manifested that classroom management was one of their major weakness and they expected to learn how to manage students during the practicum. Some of them finished the semester achieving this, some others did not. The different views between teacher educators and pre-service teachers reflect that on one hand, pre-service teachers were expected to prove how good they were as teachers. Conversely, pre-service teachers were struggling to survive in the school environment.

b) As the expectations were high not only from teacher educators, but also from school teachers, pre-service teachers had to cope with the sometimes overwhelming responsibilities and tasks both at school and at university. The data revealed in several occasions how frustrated pre-service felt as they had to do many things which in some cases surpassed their responsibilities as either students or teachers at schools. An example of this is when school teachers assigned them to do other things besides like teaching to other levels, or preparing material, videos, etc.

c) Approaches to English that were not necessarily appropriate to the classroom. In this case, pre-service teachers were expected to use English all the time in the class, use communicative tasks, and use a PPP structure of the class. These expectations of language teaching in some cases were not realistic and they were contradictory to the school curriculum and school culture.

Contradictions in the practicum emerged differently in the two contexts of learning: at school and at university. In light of the data, it is apparent that to fully understand the nature of learning to teach English it is necessary to see how pre-service teachers traversed between the boundaries of the university and school context and vice versa. This became evident in the analysis as the practicum was examined. Here boundaries are understood as "sociocultural differences leading to discontinuities in action and interaction" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, p. 152). This is evidenced in the lack of dialogue and interaction between the school and the university and pushing pre-service teachers to do the coordination, reflection and transformation.

BOUNDARY CROSSING

Boundary crossing is a useful concept to analyse the trajectory between university and school. As Akkerman and Bakker (2011) propose, boundary crossing enriches the notion of transfer in different learning contexts. Boundary crossing goes beyond the idea of applying knowledge and skills from one context, the university, to the other one, the school. The concept of boundary crossing considers "ongoing, two-sided actions and interactions between practices" (p. 136). This means that the relationship between school and university is not engendered by the appropriateness of the curriculum of the teacher education program, and the application of knowledge at school. In contrast to transfer, however, the notion of boundary crossing urges us to consider not only how universities prepare for pre-service teachers to teach, but simultaneously how current teaching experiences of pre-service teachers during university trajectories are exploited for learning to become a teacher of English in Chile.

Drawing on Wenger (1998) and Engeström et al's (1995) understanding of 'boundaries' as sociocultural differences leading to discontinuity in action or interaction, I will illustrate how pre-service teachers crossed boundaries between the university and schools in the activity system of learning to teach EFL. This can be represented by the two triangles in Figure 1.
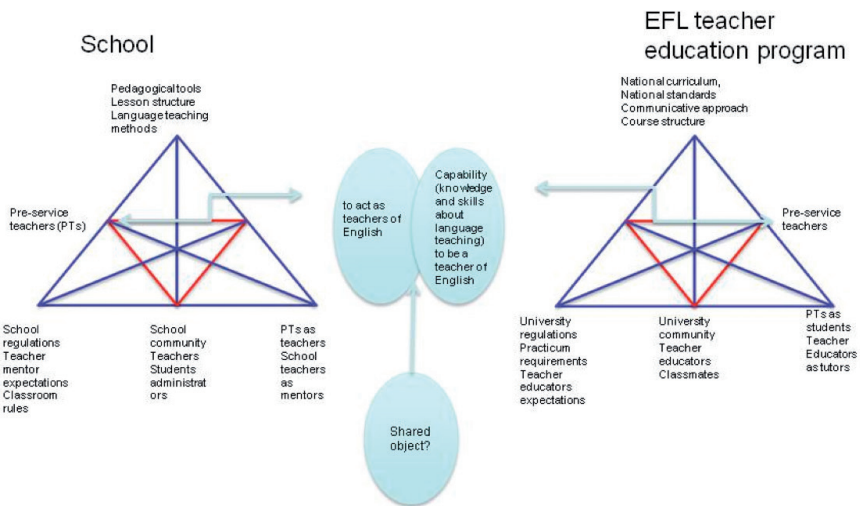

Figure 1: Learning to teach English at the schools and at university based on Engeström 2001, p. 136; and Tsui & Law, 2007, p. 1293

The left triangle represents the activity of learning to teach at schools from the pre-service teachers' perspective. The object of the activity is to learn how to act as teachers of English at schools. The mediating tools are: pedagogical tools (activities), lesson structure, teaching methods (these oppose the schools' views regarding teaching, grammar based, textbook based, etc.). The rules, norms, expectations and perceptions of school are formed both historically and culturally. Pre-service teachers are expected to behave according to the conventions of the school community in which they are placed. The division of labour is given by the roles that pre-service teachers had to take as full teachers at schools, and do different tasks that the schools imposed. The community is formed by school teachers, students, and school staff.

The right triangle represents the activity at the university education program. The primary object is to gain the capability to be teachers of English with the knowledge and skills about language teaching to be competent and qualified teachers of English. The activity is mediated by the national curriculum, communicative approach, and learner centred teaching tasks. The rules are those of the teacher education program. Pre-service teachers follow the regulations given as students of a university program. In this sense, pre-service teachers are expected to comply with practicum requirements laid down by the university program (e.g. lesson plans with a specific structure, journal reflections, final report). Although in both settings, the schools and university, the goal directed actions of pre-service teachers in the surface look similar, they are subordinated to different motives. One is to ensure that their pedagogical practices conform to the teacher mentors or school expectations, and the other is to conform to the teacher educator and the university's expectations.

From the preceding analysis, we can see that when the two activities interacted through pre-service teachers' participation, the multiple perspectives, and multivoicedness are inherent in the interaction generating contradictions. The concept of multivoicedness refers to the multiple points of view, traditions and interests represented by the community present in the activity system (reference). In this study, mutlivoicedness was given by the different views amongst teacher educators, school teachers and pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers needed to operate in two different settings with two different, though related objects. Their own learning as teachers was their primary object, but their object was different from the teacher educators' and school teachers'. Pre-service teachers found ways to work around the contradictions by adapting their behaviour to the different setting. The reports, and data collected in observations confirm how pre-service teachers changed their teaching styles, and discourse according to whether they were at the university seminar or if they were at school in the classroom.

Teacher educators and school-teachers rarely worked collaboratively to offer advice to pre-service teachers on classroom teaching. If this were the case, there would be a third space in which there was a shared intention to help the pre-service

teacher with his/her teaching. In most cases, school teachers, were not concerned about the learning of pre-service teachers. In fact, in most cases, the school teachers were imposed with the mentor role and they struggled to know what to do with the pre-service teachers. They were hired at schools to do their jobs as English teachers, and did not have any contractual agreement with the university. Consequently, most of them were interested in pre-service teachers to cover the school curriculum, and that the classes flowed smoothly without many behavioural problems. Some school teachers accepted the role as mentors to have some free time. Some others were interested in pre-service teachers providing them with some new activities, some new audiovisual material, but almost no one of the school teachers interviewed or observed were interested in the learning of pre-service teachers.

The dominant motive shaping the activity during the context of the practicum appears to have been different from those associated with the university. Once the pre-service teachers were placed into the school context, different rules, tools, participants, and motives dominated this context—they were no longer closely tied to the education program. The school administrators, national curriculum, school curriculum and school teachers helped establish the dominant motives of the activity in each pre-service case. In most cases, the dominant motive was to teach English effectively (as the community expected) and to cover curriculum content. Most school positioned and shaped pre-service teachers' beliefs about language teaching similar to their own. This context for learning to teach had the potential to further shape pre-service teachers' beliefs, learning, use different pedagogic tools, and develop a professional teacher identity. This was more likely to happen in the schools where pre-service teachers regarded as teachers in the classrooms by teacher, administrators, and students.

In the program, however, pre-service teachers were regarded by teacher educators as students or learners of teaching. Often differing roles, expectations, and motives were set in each of these contexts with regard to carrying out the same activity — teaching English. Most pre-service teachers tried to balance simultaneously their university role, tasks and teaching approaches with the school context. Pre-service teachers crossed boundaries and negotiated their identities interacting with the members of the different contexts. This finding confirms what previous studies (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Jahreie, 2010; Luebbers, 2010; Tsui & Law, 2007) have evidenced regarding learning to teach, that is, that crossing boundaries carries learning potential. The social nature of their learning is given through the interactions and negotiations pre-service teachers do every time they cross the boundaries. However, as seen in data, this can also be the cause of frustration and disappointment.

Conclusions

This paper sought to contribute to the understanding of learning to teach EFL as an activity. In light of the data, the findings revealed how pre-service teachers crossed boundaries and negotiated their ways to become legitimate members of each community. It demonstrated that crossing boundaries is a challenging task that has a potential for transforming the learning activity. The analysis tends to support Tsui and Law's (2007) assertion that states "teacher education programs should not only be concerned about how much pre-service teachers know or whether they have acquired transferable skills, but more importantly, whether they have developed the capability to engage in expansive learning by confronting disturbances through crossing boundaries." (p. 1300). This is also relevant for the Chilean context in which teachers have to constantly traverse through different classroom contexts and teaching views. It is highly necessary that they learn how to confront the contradictions and resolve them.

In conclusion, the current study has demonstrated the power of CHAT as an explanatory tool in recognising individual, social, and contextual factors that shape the nature of teacher learning and their instructional practices. Specifically, activity theory analysis on contradictions proved to be helpful in exposing particular factors that afforded and constrained pre-service teachers' learning. Thus, activity theory contributed to shed light into the dialectic nature of teacher learning and its contradictory dynamics between national educational policies, teacher education programs, between theory and practice, and between pre-service teachers' views and classroom reality. This finding confirms the contention that CHAT is a comprehensive framework that enables researchers to consider the sociohistorical constructs undergoing tensions that come from different levels (Yamagata-Lynch, L. C., & Haudenschild, M. T., 2009)

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CHAPTER 5

FORMAL SCHOOLING AND SELF CONSTRUCTION: A HISTORICAL-CULTURAL NARRATIVE APPROACH

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Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present a Historical-cultural approach to the relationship between formal education, conceived as a sociocultural activity (Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1985), and self. Although the two terms, formal schooling and self have been the object of extensive research by scholars interested in the relationship between culture and mind, the specific connection between them has not traditionally been studied within the Historical-cultural perspective. There is a long tradition within this approach of research about how formal schooling influences mental processes such as perception, categorization and concept formation, memory, reasoning and problem solving that can be traced back to Luria's expedition to Central Asia. However, the specific topic of self and identity has not received equal attention. In contrast, the self has become a central topic of research in cross-cultural psychology (see, for instance, Kitayama, Duffy and Uchida, 2007, for a review of this tradition). Despite the fact that one of the chapters in Luria's (1976) work was devoted to the analysis of how cultural experiences such as formal schooling influenced self-definition and self-consciousness, this problem has received less attention than deserved within the historical-cultural tradition. In this Chapter, we aim to contribute to this field. To do so, we shall start by presenting the main research findings about formal schooling and mental processes in historical-cultural psychology, including Luria's seminal study. Once we have presented these findings and the predominant explanations proposed in this tradition (in terms of ways of thinking) we shall focus on the self. After reviewing cross-cultural research about self-construal (based on Markus and Kitayama's distinction between independent and interdependent self) we will outline the theoretical notion of self that we assume

and present some studies developed in our research group (Laboratorio de Actividad Humana) aimed at exploring how formal schooling may influence self-construction. To end the chapter we include a first attempt at making sense of our study data by integrating ideas from Olson (1994, 1997) Greenfield (2009, Greenfield, Keller, Foligni and Maynard, 2003) and her notion of "cultural pathways to development" with other concepts from the historical-cultural tradition.

Formal schooling and mental processes: evidence from (cross)-cultural research

There is a long tradition of research into the impact of formal schooling on mental processes. In this section we review this literature, and we start with the classical and well-known study of Alexander Luria (1976) in Central Asia.

Luria's classical studies about culture and mental processes

The goal of these studies was to demonstrate the historical nature of psychological processes; in other words, the way that changes in the conditions of social practice created new activity motives and, thereby, transformed mental processes. For that purpose, Luria organized an expedition to Central Asia (part of the Soviet Union at that time) to investigate different groups of people living in the Republics of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. These people were immersed, in different ways and degrees, in a process of socio-economic and cultural change as a result of the Socialist Revolution in the Soviet Union. Hence, the participants differed in their level of schooling and their integration into the new forms of social distribution of labor.

In his study of categorization and concept formation the conclusions were that for participants who lived in more "traditional" life conditions (non-literate peasants in subsistence economy) *practical utility* seemed to be the general principle that organized all their classifications. In contrast, the participants who lived in "modern" life-conditions (working on collective farms and literate) used formal categories as a criterion for clustering. Similar observations were made by Luria when he presented the participants with problem solving tasks, such as syllogisms and others. While literate schooled participants solved the problems by relying on the conditions of the task, the answers provided by non-literate participants ignored these conditions (i.e., the premises of the syllogisms) and refused to draw conclusions from them; instead they appealed to their lack of personal experience about the case to justify their incapacity to answer. For Luria, these participants did not stay within the limits imposed by the problem, conceived as a "logical space", regardless of the eventual existence of practical experience.

As a general conclusion, Luria thought that the Cultural Revolution associated to the Socialist Revolution (that included, among other changes, the extension of formal schooling) promoted new ways of thinking that enabled these people to go beyond the constraints of everyday concrete experience and base their thinking on logical operations. The differences observed by Luria in the ways schooled and non-schooled people solved cognitive tasks have been replicated in cross-cultural and cultural research. We shall now focus on some of these studies.

(Cross-) Cultural studies about formal schooling and mental processes

Numerous studies have been conducted in cross-cultural psychology analyzing the influence of cultural factors and experiences on mental processes. Let us look at some of the main findings on the role of formal schooling on cognitive processes.

With regard to classification, cross-cultural studies have focused on three specific topics: the type of classification, the possibility of changing clustering criteria, and the use of language to explain the criteria. The results of these studies have evidenced differences between schooled and non-schooled participants in all these aspects. In this sense, children and adults with experience in formal schooling tend to use form and function as the predominant criteria for clustering. In contrast, the performance of non-schooled participants is based on concrete psychological operations (Bruner, Oliver and Greenfield, 1966; Greenfield and Bruner, 1966, Lin, Schwanenflugel and Wisenbaker, 1990; Mishra, 1997...). In a similar vein, schooled participants are more likely to vary the criteria (Cole and Scribner, 1974) and to provide verbal explanations for their categorizations (Scribner, 1968/1992, 1977; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Cole and Scribner, 1974). Non-schooled participants, in contrast, tend to explain their clustering by referring to the participation of the objects in the same practical activity.

In the same way, the general conclusion from the studies on problem-solving is that schooled children and adults, unlike non-schooled participants, tend to consider that these problems could be solved by applying a general rule (Cole and Scribner, 1974; Scribner and Cole, 1973, 1981). Later studies conducted in other cultures evidence the difficulties of non-schooled participants to generalize rules from one situation to another (Mishra, 1997; Olson and Torrance, 1996; see also Carraher, 1991; Schliemann, Carraher and Ceci, 1997; Saxe, 1991).

With regard to another related topic, syllogistic reasoning, studies conducted in diverse countries and contexts (Cole, Gay, Click and Sharp, 1971; Sharp, Cole and Lave, 1979; Luria, 1976; Scribner, 1977; Scribner and Cole, 1981) have evidenced differences in the responses to verbal logic problems, such as syllogisms, depending on the schooling experience of the participants. Non-literate participants do not usually answer these

problems, and when they do so, their response is based on the data from their experience. Schooled participants, in contrast, do not only answer with more frequency than non-schooled individuals, but they also tend to base their answer on theoretical reasoning (Sharp et al., 1979; Scribner, 1977; Scribner and Cole, 1981).

Among the memory tasks employed in cross-cultural research, free-recall is the one that has generated the greatest number of studies. Cole et al. (1971), for instance, carried out a study comparing schooled and non-schooled children, adolescents and adults from California and Senegal. Results showed that schooled participants recalled more objects and words than those without schooling experience. Similar results were found by Sharp et al. (1979) in a large study in Yucatan (Mexico), where participants with extensive schooling experience recalled more items than those with less schooling experience. Categorical clustering was extensively observed in those who had attended secondary school.

One of the questions which has provoked a great deal of controversy in cross-cultural research concerns the mechanisms that may explain the above differences. The study conducted by Scribner and Cole (1981) in Liberia among the members of the Vai group shed critical light on this issue. According to Scribner and Cole, the differences must be explained by the nature of the cultural practices or activities carried out in schools. These activities, rather than the use of specific technologies such as literacy, explain the cognitive changes associated to formal schooling.

These activities would promote different ways of thinking. These ways of thinking have been called *scientific thinking* (implying the predominant use of "scientific concepts") (Vygotsky, 1986), *theoretical argumentation* (Scribner, 1992) or *propositional thought* (Bruner, 1986; 1990). Let us take a brief look at what is meant by these terms.

Vygotsky (1986) assumed the existence of different ways of thinking, as he showed in his analysis of concept development. He distinguished between *everyday* and *scientific concepts*. Everyday concepts consist of a set of specific objects that may constitute a concept, at least in relation to its external characteristics, (i.e. the elements included in the same category). However, because of the criteria used to put the objects together in the same group, it is far from being a scientific concept.

Scribner (1977), also from historical-cultural psychology, has formulated a second classification and she distinguishes between *empirical* or *functional* and *theoretical argumentation*. For this author, empirical or functional argumentation, a characteristic of non-schooled people, relies on the information coming from experience (functional evidence). Theoretical argumentation, on the other hand, is characteristic of schooled people, because they understand the demands and requirements of the logical genre and are able to argue on the basis of the limits imposed by this genre. Argumentation is based on formal evidence, coming from the information that is presented in the premises.

A third classification was formulated by Bruner (1986; 1996). He has distinguished between *narrative* and *propositional thinking.* They are two forms of meaning

construction, of understanding reality and, therefore, ways of making sense of experience. Narrative thinking orders experience temporarily to create a story in which two landscapes must be constructed. One is the landscape of action, where the constituents are the arguments of action (agent, goal intention, situation, instrument). The other is the landscape of consciousness, including the motivations, mental states and emotions of those involved in the action. In the propositional system, meaning is achieved by abstraction, sacrificing temporality, personalization and context. Particular instances are placed into larger and more general category systems. The propositional system shapes meaning-making through the structured network of symbolic, syntactic and conceptual rules governing language and common sense logic. In short, causal necessity (as opposed to narrative necessity) is established through this system.

Studies conducted by the Laboratory of Human Activity (LAH, in Spanish) with people attending adult schools in Andalusia have also provided evidence of the relationship between formal schooling and different mental processes: clustering, concept formation, memory, etc. (L.A.H., 1988; de la Mata and Sánchez, 1991; Sánchez and de la Mata, 2005, Cubero and de la Mata, 2001, Cubero, de la Mata and Cubero, 2008; Santamaría, Cubero and de la Mata, 2010). Again, results have evidenced differences in the way people solve different tasks. While more schooled people used what Bruner called propositional thinking, the participants with very little educational experience, in contrast, used a narrative way of thinking.

Self in cultural context: cultural research about the self

The influence of formal education on mental processes does not seem to be the only one that this institution and the cultural practices associated with it exert. From psychology and the social sciences, in general, it is claimed that literacy and formal schooling have played a fundamental role in the constitution of the modern subject (Olson, 1994, 1997; Ramírez, 1995). Thus, for example, Olson (1994) claims that the modern mind has been constituted since Descartes and authors like Hume, Berkeley and Kant and the ideal of the Enlightenment. These authors emphasize the notion of an autonomous subject, whose acts are governed by a mind populated with ideas, beliefs, desires, memories, etc. For Olson, these notions of subject and mind are related to the cultural changes that have arisen in the Western world since the extension of literacy at the beginning of Modernity (linked to the Protestant Reformation and the origins of capitalism). More specifically, Olson claims that literacy and literate practices permitted the separation of things and their representations, so that thinking became an "autonomous" activity about the world, in other words, an "epistemic" activity, with mind an object defined by mental states.

We believe that in psychology, despite its importance, this issue has not received the attention that it requires. Let us look at some data to support up this claim. Firstly, in one of the studies carried out by Luria (1976) the participants were asked to define themselves. This study evidenced the difficulties experienced by illiterate non-schooled peasants from Uzbekistan to define themselves as individuals, regardless of their groups of belongingness (family, village...). In contrast, the participants living in "modern" conditions (i.e. working on collective farms and with some school experience) evidenced a higher tendency towards self-analysis and self-consciousness, providing self-descriptions in terms of abstract psychological traits.

More recently, cross-cultural research in psychology has shown differences in the conception of the self (self-construal) that is characteristic of different cultures. In this sense, Markus and Kitayama (1991) have distinguished between *independent* and *interdependent* self-construal. According to Markus and Kitayama, *independent* self-construal is characteristic of Anglo-American, Northern and Central European cultures. This independent self is conceived as a separate and autonomous entity, defined by a unique repertoire of traits, capacities, thoughts and feelings. The focus tends to be on asserting one´s needs, as well as preserving individuality, uniqueness and independence. In contrast, the *interdependent* self is characteristic of non-Western cultures (Asian, African, and Latin American cultures). In this case, the self is experienced as part of a social web (Cross and Markus, 1999; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Kagitçibasi, 1997, 2005; Triandis, 1995). For a person with a highly interdependent self-construal, the boundaries of the self tend to be more fluid and include significant others in specific situations; the concept of the self tends to be less static and more contextualized and situated. These differences in the emphasis on independence vs. interdependence are evidenced in diverse aspects of the self, such as the experience and expression of emotions, cognitive processes, attributions, and moral reasoning or achievement motivation, among others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Notwithstanding, authors like Kagitçibasi (1997, 2005, 2007) have rejected the traditional consideration of autonomy as opposed to relatedness, which is characteristic of Western psychology. For Kagitçibasi, the Western individualistic concept of autonomy connotes two different meaning dimensions. One is related to personal separateness-relatedness (the degree of distancing the self from others). She calls this the "interpersonal distance" dimension, with two poles (separatedness and relatedness). The other is the "agency" dimension, which extends from agency (autonomy) to dependency (heteronomy). For Kagitçibasi these two dimensions are independent, so that agency does not necessarily mean separateness. Kagitçibasi proposes the construct of autonomous-related self that is based on a reconceptualization of autonomy, evoking its meaning of agency and untangling it from personal distance. The model of the autonomous-related self would be prevalent in urban contexts of

traditionally collectivist cultures in the "Majority world." It is emerging from socio-economic development and urbanization in these societies (i.e. Mexico).

The relationship between culture and self is closely connected to the relationship between autobiographical memory and culture. In these studies, one of the aspects that has received most attention is the *age at the earliest memory* (Wang, 2001, 2006; Wang and Conway, 2004). Evidence shows that the first memory of individuals from cultural groups that emphasize the importance of the personal past is earlier than in other cultural groups (Mullen, 1994; MacDonald, Uesiliana and Hayne., 2000; with additional support in Harpaz-Rotem and Hirst, 2005). When asked to recall their earliest childhood memory, Europeans and Caucasian Americans remember events back to, on average, age 3.5, whereas Asian adults' first memories are dated about 6 months later (MacDonald et al., 2000; Mullen, 1994; Wang, 2001; Wang and Ross, 2005). The cultural variation in the age at the earliest memory is thought to stem from different cultural conceptions of self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Mullen, 1994; Wang, 2001, 2003). The autonomous self-construal characteristic of Western cultures may drive the early emergence of an organized, articulated, durable memory system for events that happened to "me". In contrast, a relational self-construal that focuses on community rather than agency may de-emphasize individuality and promote social integration and dependence. Consistently, earliest memories reported by Caucasian Americans are more elaborated, specific, self-focused, emotionally elaborate, and less socially oriented than those reported by Asian people (Han, Leichtman, and Wang, 1998; Leitchman, Wang and Pillemer, 2003; Fivush, 2011).

From our perspective, the studies mentioned above represent a precedent for the study of how cultural experiences may influence autobiographical memory and the self. Among these cultural experiences, our interest focuses on formal schooling. Before coming to this issue, we would like to outline our theoretical approach to the self. In this sense, we want to emphasize that we do not conceive the self as a homogeneous and stable entity, a sort of unified support of individual acts. On the contrary, we agree with many scholars who define the self as *distributed* and *dialogical*.

Bruner (1996), for instance, defends the existence of a distributed self, and considers it as "a swarm" of participations that is the product of the situations in which the person participates. The person, from this perspective, constructs his/her identity as an individual differentiated from others. On the other hand, Bruner claims that the self takes its meaning from the historical circumstances of culture. It rests on meanings, languages and narratives which are culturally and historically specific (Bruner, 1996; 2003). In a related vein, one of the most significant characteristics of the self is its narrative structure (the *storied* self, according to Bruner). When people are asked what they are like, individuals usually tell a great variety of stories, by using traditional elements of narrative. As we said above, Bruner (1986; 1990) considers narrative both as a discourse mode and as a way of organizing experience. The story, as a whole, has

a meaning or gist. The intelligibility of narrative is based on verisimilitude: that is, its content must be taken as something that is likely to happen, something that "may happen to me". Narratives, thus, provide an interpretation of events, rather than an explanation (Bruner, 1996). As Bruner himself states, a story involves an action carried out by an agent in a scenario where normative expectations have been breached. As we said before, any narrative involves a dual landscape: the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness.

Thus, we assume that the self can be understood as a personal, self-making narrative that provides meaning to the individual's life (Bruner, 2003). Put another way, we conceive self narratives as the tools that permit the existence of a (perceived as) continuous and "coherent" self. They are discursive constructions mediated, like any other narrative, by the semiotic tools the individuals must appropriate throughout their lives (Santamaría and Martínez, 2005). The appropriation of these semiotic tools is related to participation in different socio-cultural settings. This participation involves the appropriation of discourses both from other individuals (the "significant others") and from social institutions (school, religion...).

The former implies that self-narratives are rooted in more or less implicit cultural models of what a person is and should be. These models provide the guidelines for self-making (Bruner, 2003). As Hermans (2003) states: *"Collective voices are not simply outside the self as an external community, but they are part of the individual self, and, at the same time, transcend it as a part of a broader historical and social community"* (p.105).

The above conception of the self has been developed in a series of studies conducted by the LAH. These studies have focused on two main topics:

- Studies about identity reconstruction in a cultural context. This includes issues such as the construction of lesbian identity in a cultural context (Sala, 2008; Sala and de la Mata, 2009), identity reconstruction and empowerment of women after suffering gender violence (Cala et al., 2011) or the process of acculturative integration of Moroccan women, conceived as a process of personal and community empowerment (García-Ramírez, de la Mata, Paloma and Hernández, 2011). In all these studies, the authors have applied a narrative analysis to reveal some of the discursive mechanisms and resources involved in narrative self-making (Bruner, 2003).

- Studies about the influence of formal schooling on self construction. More specifically, these studies have tried to examine how formal schooling, together with other cultural factors, such as culture of origin or generation influence the self, identity and autobiographical memory (de la Mata, Santamaría, Hansen, Ruiz and Ruiz, 2011; Ruiz, 2007; Santamaría, de la Mata,

Hansen and Ruiz, 2010; Santamaría, de la Mata and Ruiz, 2012; Contreras and Cubero, 2009). In the next section, we shall focus on some of these studies.

Formal education, autobiographical memory and self

In the previous section we presented our approach to the self. This conception integrates the classical ideas from Historical-Cultural Psychology with other notions about the narrative construction of self in cultural settings. In this section we are going to present some studies developed by the LAH about the the influence of sociocultural activities such as formal schooling on the development of a notion of self, characterized by an emphasis on autonomy and agency. As we shall discuss in the last section, this notion of self has many points in common with Olson's (1994) notion of literate mind and subjectivity.

We are going to start with a study that examined the role of formal schooling, culture of origin and generation in the notions of "border" and "resident on the border" of people living on the two sides of the Rio Grande border (between Tamaulipas, Mexico and Texas, US) (Contreras and Cubero, 2009). For this chapter, we focus on the results about the relations between formal schooling experience and the way the participants defined those notions.

The results of the study are completely coincident with (cross-) cultural research presented in Section 2. The classical studies by Luria (1976), Bruner (Bruner, Oliver & Greenfield, 1966 and Greenfield and Bruner, 1966), and more recent studies by Cole (Cole and Cigagas, 2010; Cole and Parker, 2011); Cubero (Cubero and de la Mata, 2001; Cubero et al., 2008); Medin, Unsworth and Hirschfeld, (2007) or Schlieman and Carraher (2001), as well as the study reported here, all found differences associated to the educational experience of the participants in the type of concepts elaborated and, particularly, in the verbal explanations of concepts.

In our case, scientific concepts (in Vygotsky's 1986 terminology), or theoretical argumentation (Scribner, 1977) or propositional thinking (Bruner, 1986; 1990) were mostly employed by the participants from the higher educational level when defining a resident on the border. They tended to speak about residents on the border in the following terms *"... she/he is from two places, form two cultures simultaneously"* or *"they are people that, yet administratively belonging to a country, they participate in services and activities of the other"*.

This way of constructing *arguments*, in Bruner's (1996) terms, as the people in the higher educational level did, seems to reflect general formulations that can be applied to a broad set of situations, going beyond concrete and particular data, towards higher levels of abstraction. Moreover, in these responses we can observe some characteristics of propositional thinking or theoretical argumentation (Bruner, 1986; 1996; Scribner,

1977): the absence of references to the participants' life experiences. In other words, the form of argumentation of the participants with more school experience was not only characterized by the use of scientific concepts, but also for general utterances, by the intervention of generic characters. That corresponds to the model of "modern" citizen described by Olson (1994), with the predominance of an independent self-construal defined in an autonomous and non-relational way (Kagitçibasi, 1997; 2005; 2007).

In contrast, the responses of the participants from the intermediate educational level were very rich in information about their personal experiences. They included themselves, their relatives and acquaintances in these responses. For authors such as Scribner (1977) and Bruner (1986, 1990, 2003), inspired in Vygotsky's typology of concepts, these forms of definition represent another modality of thinking, that relies on different elements linked to everyday context. Here is an example of this type of response: "*Treatment, I treat people well they like me, aah... I am kind with people, I am not always fighting, I am like this". "...my relatives, my friends and I we are honest, with one foot here and the other in Brownsville*"

In this study, as well as in Luria´s (1976), we can see the difficulties experienced by people with very little schooling experience when defining themselves as individuals, regardless of groups of reference (family, village ...). That is, people with a low level of education tended to define themselves by using functional or empirical argumentation (Scribner, 1977; Scribner and Cole, 1981) or empirical reasoning (Luria, 1976). They put more emphasis on a collective or interdependent self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Moreover, other studies have pointed out the difficulties these people experience when following task instructions and verbalizing the criteria applied to solve the tasks (Cole and Parker, 2011; Kitayama and Cohen, 2007; Matsumoto, 2001; 2006).

Another study, conducted by the authors of this chapter, explored the relationship between schooling experience and autobiographical memory (de la Mata and Santamaría, 2010; de la Mata, Santamaría, Hansen, Ruiz and Ruiz, 2011; Santamaría, de la Mata and Ruiz, 2012). A sample of Mexican participants from three different educational levels (literacy, basic level and university students) were asked to relate their earliest memory orally. We analyzed these memories to asses some of their characteristics (age at the earliest memory, emotionality and content) and issues related to the self and others (autonomous orientation, agency and social orientation). Results showed that the memories reported by the participants from the groups with more schooling experience, and especially university students, were, on the whole, earlier, with more emotional terms, more self-focused and specific and showing a higher level of individual agency than those reported by the participants with less schooling experience.

We also conducted a narrative analysis, inspired by Bruner's (1986) characterization of the double landscape in narrative and by Smorti's (2004) coding system that distinguished between action and mental state verb units. We added a new category,

metacognitive units, to account for sentences in which the participants reflected about the memory as a whole or about the very process of remembering. This type of unit was indicative of a way of thinking about the memory as a mental object in the subject's mind. In general, these analyses addressed the way in which the self, as narrator and as a character, was constructed in the memory and the importance of the self's mental states in the narrative. The results showed a relationship between schooling experience and the number and proportion of mental state verbs and metacognitive units in the memories. The narratives of the participants from the literacy level were mostly composed of action verb units. These units represented almost 70% of the total units. The other 30% included mental state verbs and metacognitive evaluations (24% of mental state and 7% of metacognitive units).

In the basic level, we observed a relative increase in the reference to mental states, which represented 33% of the total number of units and, conversely, a decrease in the proportion of action verb units (60% of the total number of units). These differences in action and mental state verbs units were not only relative, but also in absolute numbers. In the case of metacognitive units, however, there was no difference between the literacy and basic level, either in relative or absolute terms.

Finally, in the university students' level we observed an increase in both mental state verbs and metacognitive units. In this level, mental state verbs represented more than 40% of the total number of units, while action verb units constituted less than 50%. In absolute terms, however, the number of mental state verb units was significantly higher in teh university tan in the literacy level, but not significantly higher tan in the basic level. The major difference between the university and the basic level was related to the use of metacognitive units, which represented 12% of the total number of units (6% in the basic level). To summarize, the memories narrated by the university students in our study were characterized by a predominance of the landscape of consciousness (Bruner, 1986), with many references to mental states and a high degree of reflexivity about the memory, with the presence of metacognitive evaluations of such memory. We can see that in the following excerpts.

> "…It´s a very pleasant memory. I do not know, I am not sure, but it makes me feel calmness and pleasure…"

In contrast, the memories narrated by the participants from the literacy level were characterized by a predominance of the landscape of action, with a smaller number of references to mental states and a limited number of metacognitive reflections about the memory. The following is an example of these memories.

> *"…I remembered when I was living on the ranch, with my grandma. She was very good at cooking and taught my eldest sister. Since I was the youngest, I sat in a chair so I could learn…"*

The participants in the basic level were located in an intermediate area, as they showed a higher number of references to mental states but not an increase in metacognitive evaluation. The following is an example of the memories from this level.

> *"…I remember when my mom and my dad were living with us. My dad cooked for us, my mom so my mom had to stand for nothing. This is a very important memory in my life because we were living as a family and now it is not like this, I was about eight years old…"*

Our study, thus, showed that schooling experience was associated to forms of autobiographical remembering that are considered to be characteristic of the cultures of independence. The participants with more schooling experience narrated first memories characterized by an earlier date (around three years of age), an emphasis on autonomy and references to mental states and metacognitive reflections and evaluations, when compared with the less schooled participants. This fact allows us to speculate about the role of formal education, as a socio-cultural practice (Scribner and Cole, 1981) or activity setting (Werstch, 1985) that promotes ways of remembering and, in general, of self-making (Bruner, 2003) that have been described in autobiographical memory research as associated to the cultures of independence (Leitchman, Wang and Pillemer, 2003; Wang, 2001; 2003; Keller, 2007). In the next section we shall develop these ideas from a theoretical point of view.

Formal Schooling and Self: modes of being

As part of a book about Education from a Historical-Cultural perspective, our chapter focuses on how formal schooling, conceived as a sociocultural activity (Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1985), influences self construction. From our perspective, the analysis of this issue is a continuation of a classical problem in historical-Cultural psychology: the study of the relationship between formal schooling and cognitive processes (Luria, 1976; Cole and Scribner, 1974; Scriber and Cole, 1981). Different studies conducted at the LAH have focused on some classical topics in this research tradition (see, Cubero and Ramírez, 2005, for a comprehensive presentation of those studies).

Over the last ten years we have tried to extend the study of the relationship between formal schooling and mental processes to other fields and, in particular, to the construction of self in formal schooling contexts. In the previous sections we have

referred to some of these studies. As we said above, they provide evidence of the contribution of formal schooling activities to the development of a notion of self that is characterized by a high degree of autonomy, agency and reflection. It coincides, at least partially, with the independent model of self-construal (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In this section we are going to explore some theoretical insights that may help us elaborate the links between formal schooling and the model of self construal. To do so, we will rely on two different, but complementary, approaches: the ideas of Olson about the role of literacy in the development of the "modern" mind and Greenfield's theory about cultural pathways to development.

As we mentioned earlier, David Olson (1994) theorized about the relationship between literacy, conceived not just as a technology for reading and writing, but as a form of culture ("culture of literacy", Brockmeier and Olson, 2002) and the modern concept of mind. According to Olson, the impact of literacy goes far beyond the transcription of oral language. Literacy has become a model for understanding language, the world and our mind. The key to this new concept is the ability to separate the word from the object it represents. Following Havelock (1976, in Olson, 1994), Olson claims that this separation not only allowed us to consider language, words, as objects of reflection, but also ideas, as the "units of meaning", as objects of reflection. Consciousness of words made it possible to distinguish them from the ideas they express. Hence, literacy led to the notion of idea and mind became the repository of ideas (mental objects). In this sense, for Olson, the discovery of mind could be part of the legacy of writing.

This new concept of mind as the origin of mental objects had another implication: the emergence of self-consciousness. Since ideas come from mind, they presuppose a subject who is responsible for his/her mental states and actions. From this perspective, speech, action and mental states originate in mind and are under the control of the self. Hence, this is not only the modern notion of mind, but of subject, as well. For Olson, thus, the possibility of making language and ideas an object of reflection allowed by literacy gave rise to the development of the modern concept of mind, conceived as a repository of mental states (beliefs, desires, memories...) (The Cartesian "*res cogitans*") and of the subject (credited with autonomy and agency).

From our perspective, the findings presented in Section Four may provide support for Olson's ideas. The autobiographical memories of the participants from the university level may exemplify this modern notion of mind. They are self-focused, with a great level of agency and provide evidence of a reflexive subject who is split between two positions: as a protagonist of the narrative (at the time of the events narrated, the past), and as the narrator (at the time of the narration, the present). This interpretation of experience from the perspective of a narrative self is, according to Bruner (1990; Bruner and Weiser, in Olson, 1994), the origin of self-consciousness.

The second contribution to our theoretical approach to the relationship between formal schooling and self is the notion of cultural pathways to development (Kitayama, Duffy and Uchida, 2007; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni and Maynard, 2003, Greenfield, 2009). This notion has been developed to integrate eco-cultural and sociohistorical approaches to development (Greenfield et al., 2003). It assumes that to explain human psychological development it is necessary to consider different levels of analysis (Greenfield, 2009). At the highest level, Greenfield locates the "sociocultural ecologies". This term refers to cultural patterns of social relations. In Greenfield's (2009) words:

> The terms *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), introduced by the German sociologist To¨nnies in 1887 (1957), are my theoretical starting points for describing contrasting sociocultural ecologies. They are prototypes, each with its own particular characteristics, which are most visible at the extremes. Each prototypical environment has a corresponding developmental pathway (Abels et al., 2005; Keller, 2007). One pathway of development is well adapted to Gesellschaft environments, the other to Gemeinschaft environments (p. 402).

The sociocultural ecology of Gemeinschaft is defined by rural residence, subsistence economy (with a low technological level), relatively homogeneous groups and a low level of schooling, among other characteristics. The ecology of Gesellschaft, in contrast, is characterized by urban residence, trade and high-tech economy, heterogeneous groups, and a higher level of schooling.

The sociocultural ecologies are associated to predominant cultural values. On this level, Greenfield includes the notions of individualism and collectivism. They represent two types of adaptation to the two types of environment. So, while collectivist qualities, such as sharing among the extended family, are adapted to the daily practices of Gemeinschaft environments, such as living in a one-room house, individualistic values, such as the value of privacy, are adapted to the characteristics of Gesellschaft environments, such as houses with separate bedrooms.

Cultural values influence the organization of learning environments of human groups by promoting specific infant care practices. These practices include body contact, face-to-face-contact and object stimulation. While Gemeinschaft environments and collectivist values are associated to more body contact and less face-to-face-contact and object stimulation, the opposite is characteristic of Gesellschaft ecologies where individualistic values predominate.

The last level of analysis in this model is the level of psychological development. According to Greenfield, the different types of learning environments foster specific forms of psychological development. Kitayama, Duffy and Uchida (2007) use the expression

"modes of being" to refer to these models of psychological development. The *independent* mode of being is characterized by the centrality of the self, analytic cognition and action as influence. In contrast, the *interdependent* mode of being is characterized by the centrality of the others, a holistic form of cognition and action conceived as adjustment.

Greenfield (2009) proposes a multilevel causal model to account for the relationships between the different levels. Figure 1 represents the relationships between the different levels. As it shows, socio-demographic conditions (the sociocultural ecologies) determine learning environments directly and through the mediation of cultural values which, in turn, also have an influence on these environments. Finally, learning environments create the conditions for human psychological development.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS             │
│              ↓              ↓            │
│  CULTURAL VALUES                         │
│              ↓              ↓            │
│         LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS            │
│                    ↓                     │
│              HUMAN                       │
│           DEVELOPMENT                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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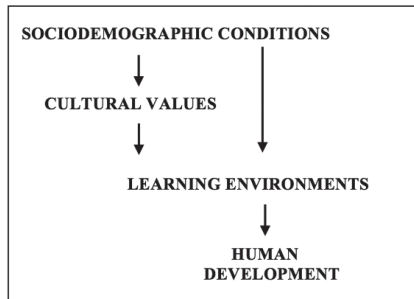
Figure 1: Multilevel causal model of human psychological development (from Greenfield, 2009, p. 403).

According to this model, the above factors combine to determine two predominant "developmental pathways", two prototypical trajectories of development towards two prototypical modes of being (in other words, two models of self-construal): independence and interdependence. The developmental pathways involve different cultural ways of solving three universal tasks of human development: relationship formation, knowledge acquisition, and the balance between autonomy and relatedness at adolescence (Greenfield et al., 2003). The resolution of these tasks, different in different cultural groups, prefigures the course of psychological development in the future. Heidi Keller and her research group have provided extensive evidence for this ecocultural model and the consequences for psychological development (see Keller, 2007, for an extensive review). Their studies have focused on different fields, such as self-recognition and self-regulation in infancy, or autobiographical memory and theory of mind in childhood. In general, Keller and cols, have found consistent evidence that links independent and interdependent self-construal, together with the autonomous-related model of self (Kagitçibasi, 2005; 2007) with specific forms of psychological development. Among them we must mention forms of

autobiographical remembering characterized by self-focusing, autonomy and attention to the individual's preferences and mental states (Keller, 2007; Schroder et al., 2013).

Greenfield (2009) has postulated that movement of any ecological variable in a Gesellschaft direction shifts cultural values in an individualistic direction and developmental pathways toward independent social behavior and more abstract cognition (independent mode of being, Kitayama, Duffy and Uchida, 2007). Therefore, this model predicts that changes such as the extension of formal schooling would affect self-construal and human cognition and, hence, autobiographical memory. This would promote the "developmental pathway" to autonomy and thus, a cultural notion of self that enhances the individual's autonomy (Kagitçibasi, 2005, 2007; Keller, 2007; Greenfield, 2009) and forms of remembering that resemble those reported in cross-cultural research as characteristics of cultures of independence (Leitchman, Wang and Pillemer, 2003; de la Mata, Santamaría, Hansen, Ruiz & Ruiz, 2011; Fivush, 2011).

Some final remarks about formal schooling and self-construal

The above theoretical ideas may help us make sense of the findings of the studies reported in Section Four. The theory of the developmental pathways to independence may account for the tendency to define the self in terms of abstract attributes and the use of theoretical argumentation in cultural self-definition, as well as for the forms of autobiographical remembering that enhance autonomy and individual agency. At the same time, Olson's ideas about the emergence of the literate mind would provide conceptual tools to understand how formal schooling and literacy may allow the rise of a notion of mind populated by mental states and a notion of the subject who is self-conscious and responsible for his/her beliefs, memories, affects and actions.

Although promising, the above ideas need further development and clarification. From a historical-cultural perspective, the consideration of formal schooling as a mere sociodemographic variable represents a limitation of the theory. Beyond that and to overcome the well-known criticisms of the conceptualization of culture as an independent variable in cross-cultural research (see Rogoff, 1981; Cole, 1996 for a review of these arguments), it is necessary to analyze the activities of formal schooling and how these activities shape self-construal and autobiographical memory.

In a related vein, and consistent with the notion of self presented in Section 3, we must consider the situated nature of self-construal. Rather than considering a stable configuration of attributes, many authors have emphasized contextual variations in self-construal (Matsumoto, 1999). From this standpoint, the notion of situatedness may capture that complexity and provide new insights into the analyses of the relationship between self and culture. But what does situatedness as a characteristic of self-construal

designate? For us, situatedness is related to both between-culture and within-culture variations. On the one hand, we must not forget that cultures and societies are dynamic, typically moving towards more individualism (e.g. Greenfield, 2009); this seems to be, for instance, the case of Spain, moving away from a more collectivistic to a more individualistic country (de la Mata, Santamaría, Ruiz, and Hansen, 2014). On the other, situatedness may also imply within-individual variations, in the sense that any individual participates in diverse cultural practices (family, school, work...). If we assume that self-construal is situated in relation to culture, the fact that every individual participates in different activities in which the relative importance of issues concerned with autonomy/agency and relation/communion, power, and other basic human needs (Kagitçibasi, 2005) vary, leads us to assume that self-construal also vary across cultural.

In the field of autobiographical memory, for instance, Wang and Ross (2005) have demonstrated the possibility of "priming" collective or private self-construal. Besides the usual differences between Eastern and Western participants in self-construal and autobiographical memories, the authors demonstrated that priming different dimensions of self-construal influenced autobiographical memories of the participants in the directions predicted.

A study conducted by Antalíková, Hansen, Gulbrandsen, de la Mata and Santamaría (2011) with the participation of two of the authors of this chapter provided additional evidence of this situatedness. In this explorative study with young Norwegians and Slovaks, memories from school also seemed to represent less relatedness (i.e., contained fewer references to other people) than the memories from another two settings. This preliminary finding is consistent with the consideration of school as an activity setting associated to autonomous dimensions of self-construal and, from a more theoretical perspective, with the notion of the self as situated and context (i.e. activity) dependent. More studies are needed to delve further into the situated character of self-construal and how the activities involved in formal schooling may promote the emergence of a specific model of selfhood.

In drawing this Chapter to a close, we would like to stress the need for more detailed analysis of the links between formal schooling activities and the development of the independent model of self. Our theoretical framework predicts this, and the evidence presented in Section 4 seems to support these links. However, while this evidence is promising, it only represents a first step in the analysis of the relationship between formal education activities and autobiographical memory and self-construal. There is much ground still to be covered in that area. As we said earlier, a more detailed examination of the way school activities influence autobiographical memory and self is also needed. This highlights the need for research to establish what happens within schools (with a particular focus on discourse and interaction in the classroom).

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CHAPTER 6

CONSTRUCTING TRANSITORY ACTIVITY SYSTEM IN PLAY-WORLD ENVIRONMENT

Pentti Hakkarainen

Abstract

The article introduces a new theoretical model of transitory activity system and play-world approach to support learning readiness. Experimental work based on this model is carried out in Finland since 1996. We present theoretical background of the model and a detailed report on planning narrative learning environments in one of our play-world projects.

Introduction

Promotion of child development and school readiness is a complicated challenge in early childhood education. In the Scandinavian educational systems transition to school is supported by a preparatory 0-grade at the age of six years and school starts at seven years. In Finland practically all children start 0-grade whereas about 70 % of the 5 years olds visit day care institutions. School readiness poses a difficult dilemma for educators. Should subject matter instruction start already in early education or should more focus be placed on play activities? The Finnish curriculum guidelines for early childhood education and care provide a dualistic answer to this problem: children's 'free' play (Rutanen, 2009) is considered important to social development, but it is the mastery of subject matter orientations (elementary knowledge of school subjects) that is seen as an essential factor of development. (Hakkarainen, 2007). It is hard to decide where is the emphasis in guideline document – on specific knowledge or general abilities. The dilemma is made even harder when no theories of child development are presented in the Finnish guidelines.

In Finland we have started a research program in 1996 supporting children's developmental continuity in vertically integrated classrooms of 4 – 8 years old children

with a multi-professional teacher team (an elementary school teacher, kindergarten teacher and a nursery nurse). The program aims at developmental results beyond school readiness defined from the point of view of classroom work at first grade. We talk about learning readiness as an element of personality development and self-understanding of children. Cultivation of imagination and creativity, development of self-regulation, goal setting and motivation are among the goals of this program. The emphasis is on narratives and plays intertwined with realistic problem solving. In other words we try to construct a specific transitory activity system combining play and realistic problem solving.

Vygotsky's (1978; 1998) theory of cultural development serves as a starting point in our program. Vygotsky separated two qualitatively different stages and periods of human development: crisis and latent periods or stabile or critical age (Polivanova, 2000). . Stages of development are separated from each other in the cultural-historical approach by indicating a dominant activity type ("leading activity") and specific motivation characterizing each stage. In our program "the crisis of seventh year" is essential (at the present we may suppose that the onset of this crisis period happens around 5 – 7 years) when transition from pretend play to school learning takes place. Our interventions include several educational measures supporting transition to school life. Our observations support results showing that play motivation still dominates among many first graders at school (Enerstvedt 1988). In other words children play school going and their intrinsic learning motivation is not developed, yet.

A specific type of educational support has to be organized in order to scaffold the developmental transitions and help children to overcome their personal crises. Our solution is "transitory activity system" between pretend play and school learning. This activity system integrates play and realistic learning challenges into integrated whole. By "activity system" we refer to Leont'iev (1978) who introduced the concept to cultural-historical approach. Each activity system has its specific motivation and object. Activity system is an analytic unit of development. Vygotsky demanded that the unit must be a unit of self-development. His general genetic law added two levels to the unit – interpsychological (social relations) and intrapsychological (internalization of higher mental functions). We have to analyse social and individual selves in play. The activity concept radically changes the focus of the analysis of development to individual participation in cultural activity systems (e.g. in play).

In our experimental setting a "transitory activity system" can be turned into stages, which each have a specific developmental challenge. The first stage marks enhancement of the developmental potential of children's play. Cultural-historical approach offers some criteria for advanced play like content of role relations, complicated story lines and surprising turns, moral tension in episodes, number of role positions, and long-term elaboration of play themes (El'konin 2005). Beginners in our classrooms are four to five year olds and they master basics of pretend play, but optimal time for a transition to

realistic learning is when interest in play starts to "fade away". We argue that specific play guidance transforms pretend play to a more complex imaginative play, joint improvisation or 'director's play'. After this stage the developmental potential of play changes. Zen'kovsky (2013) reminds us that adult play has different function compared to preschool play.

The second stage is a true transitory stage. Play interest is now weakening, but there is no intrinsic learning motivation, yet. Just the general need for mastering reality 'realistically', not in imagined situations only. At this stage our teachers construct learning environments, which combine narrative story frames with realistic problem solving. Realistic problems are embedded in story lines in such a way that children's help in solving the problems is needed to continue the story. In our play-world settings children help imaginative characters (often teachers in roles) when they solve problems intertwined with the story line. In one of our sites Winnie the Pooh arrived with his friends to the shore of a gush river and they wanted to cross the stream. Children were asked if they could help Winnie and his friends by building a sound bridge over the river. In the imaginative sound world where the story took place a bridge was built by joining words together so that the last sound of the previous word was the same as the first sound of the next word (e.g. apple – egg – glass – stone). If children break this rule the bridge might collapse.

The third stage in our program is a preparatory period of reflective learning. Instead of instructing each individual child separately the teacher organizes, guides and supports social interaction between children. The object of his work is children's interaction and interactive peer learning. Reflective learning is aimed at by using a specific program, which encourages to dialogues on problem solving between children (Zuckerman & Polivanova, 2012). The teacher guides children to reflective and critical discussions and tries to diminish adult's role as a mediator between children. Specific signs are designed to help children's reciprocal cooperation and communication (e.g. finger sign "+" shows that the child agrees with the answer of another child). Signs make different positions and solutions visible and the teacher can organize discussion between different points of view.

Narratives are used at each stage in specific *play-world* environments. Play-world is constructed mainly using classic stories and tales. Adult helps to construct imaginative worlds and actively participate in children's play activities as a partner. Literary materials are used to guide children and adults to imaginative places and events. Key events of a story can be dramatized and teachers as well as children may take roles of the characters in the story.

Based on the experiences from the experimental classrooms we have found the following tasks the most difficult to solve:

1. How to evaluate the developmental potential of children's present play activities?

2. How to plan educational interventions that would enhance children's developmental potential (including learning readiness)?

3. How to plan and organize narrative play-worlds, which result in qualitative developmental changes in children? By definition play-world is children's and adults joint imaginative activity (Lindqvist, 1995).

4. How to motivate and train educational teams for promoting advanced play activities, planning challenging imaginative environments, participating in a convincing way in joint role play with children, and introducing challenging problems intertwined with story lines?

The challenges of the play-world interventions cannot be solved without reconceptualising the relationships between narratives, play and development. This relationship is discussed theoretically in the next section. In section 3 and 4 we move to discuss the play-world intervention in more practical terms. We analyze how developmental tasks are created and how children's initiatives are supported in narrative learning settings. We also demonstrate how teachers plan and organize the play-world activities in the experimental sites. Finally, we draw together the main features of the narrative play-world as a tool for a transitory activity system.

The Developmental Potential of Play-worlds

There are two intertwined theoretical challenges in defining the developmental potential of the play-world approach: First, how to raise the quality and developmental impact of play activity in a play-world setting, and secondly, how to use the play-world as a tool for transitory activity system. The role of play in the Finnish day care has radically changed during the last two or three decades. In the 1970s and 1980s play was one of the main educational activities in day care institutions. The new curriculum guidelines of early childhood education and care (Heikkilä et al., 2005) define play as "children's age-typical way of acting". When play appears 'automatically' at certain age, as the guidelines suppose, there is no longer a need for planning and developing children's play. The guiding document of early education does not raise the question about the quality and developmental potential of play. Play as "children's age-typical way of acting" is considered a natural by-product of growth (Hakkarainen, 2007).

The basic problem of the curriculum guidelines is a misunderstanding of the importance and extensive role of play in early learning. Learning in play is limited to social and interactional skills. "Real learning" is based on teaching content knowledge and subject matter orientations. The central guiding document talks about growth and development in general terms, but does not set any specific developmental goals or present any theories (Hakkarainen, 2007). Children's wellbeing is the main goal of day

care and education in the guidelines document, which is a normative guide for writing local communal curricula.

In this chapter we will report on our attempts to change the approach to the developmental continuity between preschool and school. Traditional support programs focus on training basic (cognitive) skills of school readiness in all domains of development (e.g. social, motor, verbal skills). We emphasize general developmental potential of play and learning in narrative, imaginative environments.

The problem of the quality of play

As comparisons between cultures show societies appreciate and support children's play in widely different ways (Göncu et al., 2007). Scandinavian societies truly appreciate children's play, but educational systems emphasize children's "free play". In other words, adults avoid intervening in play as much as possible. Models of play are offered for small children, but children's independent peer play is an ideal. Representatives of cultural-historical play theory argue that adult play guidance is necessary, but the forms and content of guidance must be different at different stages of play development.

The problem is that play does not produce visible results as school learning does, but the play process itself is the product (Moyles, 1989; Garvey, 1990; Sutton-Smith, 1997; El'konin, 2005; Mihailenko et al., 2001). The basic features of the play process are unpredictability, process orientation and intersubjectivity. Play is a collective endeavor: no child alone can determine the flow of play. The children do not know beforehand what is going to happen in play so that at any point a wide range of new moves can be proposed. A participant cannot know how others will interpret her or his turns and each turn gains its final meaning in others' reactions. A large number of actions are possible, which can lead playing to radically different directions. Ambiguities between potential meanings are not solved until the subsequent turn happens. In this sense play is a primary example of a nonlinear process.

We agree with both emphases and argue that adequate adult play guidance is absolutely necessary in different forms at different stages, but adult guidance cannot be transformed into individual developmental products without children's self-initiated peer play. We are not using the term "free play" because play never is completely "free". Children pick up themes and plots from adult life. Children's self-initiated play reveals essential features of playgroups play quality (creative imagination, "perezhivanie", storyline, improvisation etc). We have proposed a play guidance model, which proceeds from a unifying narrative theme to children's self-initiated pretend play (Bredikyte, 2011; Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2013).

If we understand play as an activity system and take a longer time perspective we can see concrete results, which play experiences produce. Davydov (1996) claims that the three most important results of play in childhood are imagination, creativity and symbolic

function. These are the results of the whole play age (2 – 7 years) and they start from 'the crisis of third year' and lead to developmental crisis of the 'seventh year' (5 – 7 years). The reason why these results are so hard to see is their specific character. Other activity systems produce concrete products like houses or cars. But play activity changes the playing children and adults, psychological characteristics of individuals and their potentials.

Another difficulty of seeing the results of play activity is their form. The results are potentials rather than actual skills. Children are not consciously developing their potentials, but just playing. Carruthers (2002, p. 3) explains this in his analysis of the potential of pretend play:

> By analogy, then, if we ask what human *pretend* play is for, the answer will be: its function is to practice for the sorts of imaginative thinking which will later manifest themselves in the creative activities of adults. The connection between the two forms of behavior, arguably, is that each involves essentially the same cognitive underpinnings - namely, a capacity to generate, and to reason with, novel suppositions or *imaginary scenarios*. And here the two most important factors - whose relevance is acknowledged by all parties - are some sort of capacity to generate new ideas, on the one hand (e.g. by noticing a novel analogy), together with abilities to see and to develop the significance of those ideas, on the other.

It may sound paradoxical that the results of play activity lead to developmental crisis. Usually play is understood as a positive phenomenon. But play loses its significance as the most interesting leading activity (an activity, which produces changes in children's cultural development) in children's minds and the use of new capacities in imaginative situations is not any more the only way of acting. Children need new challenges. The results of play activity do not disappear, but new life contexts and new learning challenges are sought for. Transitory activity system can be a mediator between these contexts having at the same time imagined and realistic elements.

What characteristics of play activity are important in order to attain the named results? All play is by definition imaginative and creative activity, which uses symbols. D.B. El'konin (2005) emphasized in his play theory that children's perception of the environment does not guide play process, but sense making based on imaginative redefinition of the situation and environment. Ideas guide children's play actions, not physical reality as such. The work of imagination is visible in children's pretending. For example a row of chairs is a train in pretend play. In order to understand play a difference has to be made between sense making in imaginative situation and meaning making in realistic contexts.

In Vygotsky's sketch of play theory a transition in sense making was the main feature of play development and the source of the change of consciousness (Vygotsky, 2005). El'konin focused on the importance of the role and content of play. He separated the theme and content from each other. E.g. a theme of play may be "home" but the content

is relations between persons (role relations) at home. The cultural-historical play theory emphasizes changes in sense making and the content of role relations as the most essential characteristics of play activity (El'konin, 2005). There are some structural characteristics that can be used to define advanced, and developed social role-play or "director's play":

- Long-term play activities and themes, sometimes continuing for years

- The scripts and plots have multiple levels and they form complicated chains of events.

- Children experience genuine emotions in play

- Basic values and moral dilemmas of human life are dealt with in play

- There are several participants and role relations

- The children's play activity is self-initiated (but often adult supported)

An example of an advanced play is the play of three girls (two sisters and their best friend living ten kilometers apart from each other) called "The Rabbits of Cabbage Hill" continuing for over five years (from 6 to 12 years). The play started when each of the girls got a soft rabbit toy as a present. The rabbit play was restarted at each meeting of the girls and could continue up to 8 – 10 hours. Quite soon the girls started to transform the simple pretend role-play to director's play and the rabbit family finally grew to over seventy members. The girls drew a family tree of the rabbit clan and planned carefully personality traits for each new member. Each member of the rabbit clan had a specific (human) character, outlook and relations to other clan members. When the girls heard of a rebellious child they respectively designed a new rebellious rabbit to their clan and created conflicts with her and the other family members. The girls' play team organized weddings, divorces and funerals, and even fights between rabbits and frets. Children's favorite TV serial "Pokémon" was transformed into "Rabbitmons" presenting a softer 'girlish' version of the original serial. During the middle phase of the play trajectory the girls made a lot of props and knitted garments for the rabbits. The mode of their play transformed from role-play with toys to director's play and to verbal mode of playing. An example of the last phase is "yellow papers" of Rabbitland in which the girls wrote about rumors and scandals in the clan.

Although it is possible to discern forms of children's advanced and developmental play, there are no direct causal relations between play and development. Cultural environment and play are not simple causal factors and child development its result. Children have an active role in their own development from very early age and they make their own choices and select cultural tools, which have developmental consequences. It is proposed that the creation of individual culture starts from the age of nine months

(Lobok, 1997), and that already from their birth babies are active agents who orient to socio-cultural environment (Trevarthen, 1980).

The causal explanation of child development becomes complicated when we take into account the active role of the child. How are the child's choices determined? An additional problem is the layers of development. Individual development takes place within the historical development of childhood, and childhood develops differently in each culture and society. Educational systems and their stages are easily taken as "natural" environments of development if they are not compared with other cultures (e.g. Valsiner, 2000).

A typical feature of childhood in western cultures is to isolate children from adult world and to organize a specific "children's world" (Rogoff et al., 2005). Bronfenbrenner (1974) wrote about the same problem and its consequences. Children are not given genuine responsibility and challenges. Professional educators define their duties, set demands and tasks for children. Educational institutions have isolated children from challenging social problems and limited possibilities of development.

What is the status of play in cultural development? Cultural-historical psychology defines play as an activity system, which is the unit of cultural development. On this background we can understand Vygotsky's (1977) statement about the zone of proximal development in play: "In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself … in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behavior" (p. 96). Further, learning is a mediating link between play and development in Vygotsky's approach. Learning is connected to "action in the imaginary field, in the imagined situation, building of voluntary intention, the construction of life-plan, motives of willing", which were listed as central features of the ZPD in play. Learning in play is primarily connected to the development of learning motivation on a general level (Davydov, 1990; 1996; El'konin, 2005; Hakkarainen, 1999; 2009).

We propose an expanded definition of the ZPD. A decisive step is learning, which leads from potentials to personality change. Applied to play development we propose three qualitatively different types of zones of proximal development for the whole play age from two to seven years. An important aspect in our proposal is a qualitative change that takes place in adult-child relationship. Different types of adult help focus on different aspects of learning in play context (Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2008).

Vygotky's point was to emphasize the holistic nature of development, which can be grasped in theoretical analysis with the help of theoretical models. Separate observations of changes (e.g. increase of a child's vocabulary) do not show development, but changes of the whole activity system. Since the whole system cannot be directly observed, we have to interpret theoretically our observations and measurements. Cultural-historical approach to the study of the relation between play and development requires theoretical models of play and child development.

Crises of Development

Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concepts of critical periods of development and developmental crises. These concepts refer to periods of profound transformations in mental and social functioning as a contrast to more stable periods. He described what happens at critical periods: "abrupt and major shifts and displacements, changes and discontinuities in the child's personality are concentrated in a relatively short time…the child changes completely in the basic traits of his personality" (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 191). During critical periods new mental formations change the psychological reality of the child: "new mental formations determine the consciousness of the child, his relation to the environment, his internal and external life, the whole course of his development during the given period" (p. 190).

Vygotsky explained the transition from stable to critical periods using the concept of the social situation of development: "a completely original, exclusive, single, and unique relation, specific to the given age, between the child and reality, mainly the social reality that surrounds him" (p. 198). The relational nature of the social situation of development is important in understanding the mechanism. "The child is a part of the social situation, and the relation of the child to the environment and the environment to the child occurs through the experience and activity of the child himself; the forces of the environment acquire a controlling significance because the child experience them" (p. 294).

Leading activity in the social situation of development is the key to new mental formations at each period. Each leading activity produces new psychological structures, qualities and skills. Leading activities change the quality of psychological functions (higher mental functions). Growing psychological possibilities of the child lead to conflicts and contradictions in cooperation with adults. The child cannot realize new psychological possibilities in the old frames of interaction. This contradiction between the potentials of the child and the existing forms of interaction between adults and child leads to crisis periods in development.

Crisis periods are periods of internal changes, reorganization of internal emotional experience and feeling ("perezhivanie" – living through). "The crisis is most of all a turning point that is expressed in the fact that the child passes from one method of experiencing the environment to another" (p. 295). The needs and motives guiding the child's actions are changing and the old possibilities of acting cannot meet the needs. Each crisis period has two tendencies. Earlier results of development and approaches to reality loose their significance. The crisis as if destroys earlier forms of acting. But at the same time there are positive, constructive effects of the crisis. "Here are realized constructive processes as well and positive changes take place. They are the essence of any crisis period" (Davydov, 1996, p. 76).

Vygotsky presented his model of developmental stages using crises as the main criterion. El'konin (1999) elaborated this basic model applying the concept of leading activity as the main criterion of each stage in child development. For us two crisis periods are important: 1. The crisis of third year coincides with the beginning of pretend play, and 2. The crisis of seventh year (5 – 7 years) starts transition to "real" learning. We focus on the last period.

In preschool education (K or grade 0 at school) developmental challenges of this crisis should be taken into account while constructing educational programs. An essential psychological change at the onset of the crisis is the disappearance of the child's spontaneity. The child becomes more capricious. Behind negative changes there is a positive one, the development of own will. The child starts to form more independent opinions and creates her or his own position towards phenomena irrespective of outside pressures or situations. The following features characterize the crisis generally:

- Between willing and acting there appears more consideration on the meaning of the acting for the child and what the acting brings for the child

- The child is able to reveal some side of himself, but hide another

- Differentiation between internal and external psychological phenomena

- A new type of generalization of 'perezhivanie'

The crisis produces emotionally mediated evaluation of sense and meaning of doing. Pretend play is a preparatory stage of sense making (El'konin, 1999). Orientation towards evaluating sense and meaning of acting is a sign of transition to a new developmental period. However, often the symptoms of a psychological crisis become visible at home and the teacher may not recognize the crisis at school or kindergarten. This is why the teachers in our experimental sites have posed special questions and assignments on crisis symptoms to the parents (e.g. A set of projective picture, which stimulate the child tell about intimate personal experiences before sleep. The mother writes down child's stories and delivers to the teachers).

The crisis period leads to a new type of generalization. The child is able to take into account also non-present factors and foresee possible turns of events and consequences of action. The way of experiencing becomes more complicated and multilevel. The child is able to make choices according to his inner orientation; he is able to keep emotions, imagination and possibility for inner actions. Inner world and outside reality are differentiated and the child better starts to understand their differences.

The ability to carry out inner actions is a turning point in psychological development. The conscious division of internal and external opens a genuine world of emotions for the child instead of situational emotional reactions. The child starts to recognize himself as the source of emotional states and can guide his own mental processes, which helps to master experiences.

Transitory Activity System Between Play and School Learning

There are several horizontal concepts trying to explain interaction and exchange between activity systems, but they are not revealing developmental continuity. Such concepts are among others "boundary object" (Star et al., 1989), "knot working" (Engeström et al., 1999), and "developmental transfer" (Tuomi-Gröhn et al., 2003). An attempt in the Vygotskian tradition to explain developmental transitions from play to learning activity was made by Davydov (1996). He describes the tension between play and real mastery:

> Developed imagination and symbolic functions gradually begin to lack comprehensive and wide contents, the use of which could provide the child with a possibility to use the hidden potentials of these abilities. But play in itself cannot offer such contents to the child. Inside play activity there appear inner contradictions between actual contents, limited relations to adults and contents, which could better reveal imagination and symbolism developed by the child (Davydov, 1996, p. 112).

If we accept Davydov's explanation about the character of transition, transitory activity should emphasize and culminate the contradiction between the products of play and demands of real actions. The most effective method is to construct activity environments that combine the requirements of mastering reality and imaginative situations at the same time. A joint formal trait of play and real activity is modeling. A play role is a model constructed using symbolic tools. Different type of modeling is needed in understanding wholes and relations of real world (Davydov, 1996).

In cultural-historical psychology 'the crisis of seventh year' is often explained describing the symptoms of the crisis – changes of the child's social position (e.g. Bozhovich, Bugrimenko). Vygotsky focused on changes of the child's consciousness and as a result appears 'sense-related orientation towards personal 'perezhivaniya''. After that the battle between motives will be possible. The first representative of cultural-historical psychology proposing simultaneous existence of the child on two planes – imagined and realistic was Polivanova (2000). She also supported the hypothesis that the crisis is solved in the frame of ideal and real forms of acting. In this frame the child is able for the first time to understand that he/ she is inferior in relation to the ideal.

The comparison between the child's real behavior and available ideal (e.g. tales or stories) makes the boundary between previous and new behavior real for the child and what is essential in activity framework, the acting subject should be changing. This is reflected in Polivanova's stages of the crisis. At the pre-critical stage ideal forms of the next age are unveiled for the child. At the next critical stage new ideal forms get a mythological tone, conflict appears between what the child wants and what is possible and the child starts to reflect on intrinsic limitation of becoming adult. At the post-critical stage a differentiated relation to self appears as well as motives of further development (Polivanova, 2000).

Polivanova (1988) observed parallel imagined and realistic elements during the crisis at seven years, but her educational support was limited to recommendations to adults interacting with children at crisis. We supposed that the stages of the crisis have to be seriously taken into account in preschool education and specific transitory activity system has to be constructed in preschool education. Unveiling ideal forms of the next age (in our case ideal forms of school learning) may not be enough in supporting children's transition from preschool to school. We took seriously Davydov's worry about children's need for mastery in reality, not just in play. So we defined two goals of our project: 1) To develop joint pretend play aiming at high-level imagination and symbolic function (perquisites of the child's need for realistic mastery), 2) To elaborate learning environments and activities inviting children to explore and test ideal forms from dual domains: learning activity and personality development.

Our transitory activity system is not just make-believe play or school learning, but a hybrid form combining elements from both. Dual goals of the project have influenced practical work with children. To develop high-level make-believe play requires systematic play development starting at the age of four or five years and developing learning readiness cannot be stopped before school start (at seven years in Finland). So vertically integrated child groups (4 – 8 years) were formed and a team of three adults took responsibility for their education following a specific developmental curriculum. About half of the children are school children and half preschool children, but the adult team has collective responsibility for all 30 children.

It is impossible to attain the two goals in the traditional system because vertical integration of different age children is not possible and three separate curricula regulate educational work with children between four and eight years. The first task of the project was to write one unified curriculum for developmental education, which was accepted on city level to be used in vertically integrated groups. About 70 % of the time all children work together in specific imaginative environments e.g. 'Play-world' (Lindqvist 1995) and differentiated activities are organized for schoolchildren and preschool children the rest of time. Transitory activity system is constructed in the narrative frame of play-worlds, which are guided joint make-believe play session of adults and children each week lasting for 3 – 9 months. We call learning taking place in play-worlds and other narrative environments "narrative learning".

Narrative learning in play-worlds

Learning in narrative environment

Quite often play and learning are understood as opposite concepts and narrative learning is understood as learning of a story – how the child best learns to understand and tell the story. In our developmental curriculum narrative learning focuses on the

qualitative traits of role characters and on situations and problems they have to solve. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of imaginative situations for the development of personality. Taking a fictive role forces the child to follow the hidden rules of the role and thus he or she can overpower situational stimuli of the immediate environment. Sticking to the role and its rules is not a conscious, planned decision of the child, but rather a desire to try something exciting. Role behavior creates a tension between two subjects – the imaginary subject of role actions and the real child. This tension can later lead to changes and development of the real child (Vygotsky, 2005).

The main function of transitory activity is to prepare motivation and motives of the next leading activity. If we use Leontiev's (1978) terminology the need for "real" learning is searching for a proper object, because the object of the play activity is no longer attractive. What is then the object of narrative learning as a transitory activity? By Leontiev's definition, without object and motivation there is no activity system. According to Polivanova (2000) at the pre-critical stage of the crisis the child finds ideal forms of the next age. This is an invitation to start elaborating motivation of school learning by transforming them into real forms of acting. In daily reality children are offered ideal forms like competition (who is fastest or best in solving tasks, which cannot be basis of intrinsic motivation.

We propose that the object of narrative learning is the tension between meaning and sense of cultural phenomena. At the stage of pretend play there are successive transitions from play to negotiations on pretending and back to play. We can suppose that similar transitions take place in a narrative play-world environment, and narrative problem solving is confronted with «reality testing». Solving a problem on a narrative level creates a new problem: is the solution real or possible in imagination only? The solution makes sense in a narrative environment, but does it have a real meaning? Therefore, the object of narrative learning is not the factual content in a narrative material or in problem solving in the traditional sense. Cultural meanings, which in narrative environment are intertwined with the story lines and sense making, are essential. Problems in narrative environment are not well defined. Problems have several levels and can be interpreted in different ways.

The tension between meaning and sense as the object of narrative learning presupposes specific tools of activity that at least partly are products of pretend role-play. A central tool is the mastery of symbolism in stories and thinking. This is connected with the breakthrough of «emotional self» and emotional identification with narrative heroes. This is why children's narrative problem solving is not identical with the realistic problem solving mastered by adults. Problems are not outside «in the reality» as adults conceive them, but children are «inside the problems» due to imagination and emotional identification. Children «live through» the problems, and the sense of problem solving differs from adult problem solving and it opens the possibility for creative experimentation. Also dialogue is needed in revealing the sense of narratives, because every story includes something more than just the evolving story line. As a

result several interpretations are possible. Comparison of individual interpretations and experimentation with sense is necessary for understanding children's problem solving.

The subject of narrative learning has several levels. Individual actors construct joint imaginative collective story lines through turn taking and rules of mutuality. There are claims that joint activity and collective subject eliminate individual subjects in play environments (Gadamer, 1975). Narrative play-world environment potentially changes the subject constellation in narrative problem solving, and emotional identification of children supports the birth of collective subject of narrative learning.

Narrative learning is carried out in narrative learning communities. In «play-worlds» adults and children construct the community jointly in each theme. The community and its learning process is not a phenomenon starting at a certain point and leading to learning results defined in advance. The learning of the community is an open nonlinear process in which individuals take part in different ways.

The division of work in a narrative learning community has two levels: between adults and children, between individual children. The adults are responsible for the continuity of the theme. Adults are responsible for planning, but they have to obey the aesthetic form of play in contact with the children. The adults raise problems on the plots of stories and themes at the level of children's role relations.

Approaches to Play-world

Why is children's and adults' joint play-world needed and how does it serve developmental transition from play to school learning? It may sound paradoxical to propose play as the main tool of developing school readiness. But psychologically the transition is based on the results of advanced make-believe play and often children's "free play" without proper preliminary guidance does not produce these results. Mikhailenko's (2001) research group observed that children master many separate play skills, but they may not be able to develop complicated plots and story lines and play them together. This problem is very acute between 5 and 7 years. Children need each other's and adults' help.

The need for help may not be obvious at the peak of pretend role-play. Children may be involved in play and they demonstrate initiatives in playing. But play may have a simple plot and only few children participate in joint play. There will be a specific challenge how to enrich play and enlarge participation. Play-world approach offers a method how to help in a child-centered way.

Before the age of five years children's play is mostly based on concrete material props, roles, role talk, and observable symbolic play action. But after five years children typically start to play verbally and playing turns into intrinsic activity so that the details of their play cannot be seen. It is possible to see that a child is intensively involved in

imaginative playing, but expressions are minimal. Role actions may be only imagined. This type of play is called "director's play". What kind of guidance and help do children need if they already master different forms of play?

Zaporozhets (1986) gives a hint for guidance in his analysis of psychological differences between pretend play and folk tales: "Psychological characteristics of tales and play are quite similar. If the child acts in imaginative situation in play, listening a tale requires imagining the situation and actions as well." This similarity is used in many enrichment programs and methods aiming at plot development with children. Tales and stories build a bridge to more advanced play scripts and plots in "joint invention play" (Mihailenko et al., 2001), in the use of folk tale structure as the criterion of play plot (El'koninova, 2001), in dialogical drama (Bredikyte, 2000), and in "play-worlds" (Lindqvist, 1995). A joint feature in all these approaches is to reveal the importance of improvisational exchange and mutuality between the roles to script development.

El'koninova (2001) emphasized the will of the hero to help fellow human beings in problem situations as an example of human relations, which might influence the development of play as the key factor. Bredikyte (2000) and Lindqvist (1995) focus on the significance of basic human values, which children can understand through opposites. Opposites such as visible – invisible, fear – safety, freedom – necessity, power – subordination, good – evil, and courage – cowardice is common. Both authors emphasize the role of aesthetics and creativity in play. Play is primarily an attempt for sense making and experimentation with human values. Play and play actions cannot be directly changed to real actions and environments because play reflects reality on deeper level by focusing on sense making in a child-appropriate, comprehensive way (Hakkarainen, 2006). Sense making and experimentation occur using typical symbolic tools of each culture. The effective methods of play guidance thus have symbolic nature and focus on social relations. This is the reason why the aesthetics of play offers new tools for play guidance.

Educational Goals of Play-worlds

In our approach the play-world environment is an educational tool for creating a transitory activity system from play to school learning. The main emphasis is on joint activity of the whole classroom, but individual goal setting is also very important. In our experimental classrooms a pedagogical documentation starts at the beginning of school year in August. On the basis of the documentation the educational team (classroom teacher, a kindergarten teacher and a nursery nurse) defines educational goals of the whole class and individual children. The theme (story, tale) of the play-world is selected on the basis of these educational goals.

We have set the following general play-world program goals guiding our observations and the teachers' pedagogical documentation:

1. Discerning and crossing the boundary between real and imagined.

2. Taking responsibility for one's own and joint activity.

3. Awakening children's need and motivation for changing himself.

4. Forming an emotional personal relation to phenomena and other persons.

5. Reflecting and sense-making as the core of narrative learning.

6. Understanding the role of flexibility and multiple points of view in learning.

In our experimental classroom objectives of the play-world activities are defined anew during the first months of each study year because the participating pupils change when second graders leave the group and new children enter. Objectives of whole group play-world activities are on the level of imagination and narrative learning. Younger children develop their play competences while they participate in joint play-world activities in imaginative environments. We have divided play-world objectives into four developmental domains and named them as follows:

1. From images to imagination

2. Mutuality of relationships

3. Mastery of social reality

4. Realism of imagination

5. Aesthetic and moral development

Individual objectives range from skills of self-regulation to empathy and moral competence in interaction with peers. The theme and literary frame story is selected taking into account the potential of the play-world for attaining our goals and objectives. Sometimes the teachers have added new role characters to the original story in order to attain defined educational goals. An example is a troll world from the story "Ronya the robbers daughter" by Astrid Lindgren. That year the class had both hyperactive boys and shy girls. After doubts, the educational team decided to create a troll character "Mirkku" (a teacher in role) imitating the uncontrolled behavior of these boys and a shy troll girl "Inka" demonstrating a shy person's feelings and behavior. Mirkku's and Inka's visits as well as dialogues between children and adults afterwards left a permanent imprint on the self-control, initiatives and togetherness of the classroom (Hakkarainen, 2009).

Tasks and Assignments in Play-worlds

The object of narrative learning was defined above as a contradiction between sense and meaning. How is this kind of object constructed in play-world practice? A general approach is to create a collision between sense and meaning in the story line of the play-world[1]. We have used two types of situations in creating the connection. First, the collision can be already present in the plot of a selected tale or a story. Secondly, a collision or a problem situation is added to the original story line.

An example of the first type is the play-world of "Snow Queen". Our students decided to dramatize the tale for the children in five consecutive sessions. They carefully prepared a plan to carry out discussion after every presentation. The students were disappointed when children (5 – 6 years) were not interested in their questions about the tale. The conclusion was that the dramatization did not "work". Afterwards a mother came to tell how her daughter had started a discussion at home about this tale and its dramatic turning points. The child had asked: "Why did Kai turn so evil after getting a piece of mirror in his eye?" The children also launched long-term plays reflecting the events of the story in the day care center after the dramatizations. We may conclude that the creation of dramatic tension was successful and the children started to contemplate on dramatic collisions, but the students did not have appropriate dialogical tools for reaching the children's viewpoints.

Problems of the second type are presented as a part of the story line, but they can be solved with realistic tools. The solutions can be imaginative and creative but they often resemble school tasks and assignments. School-like tasks are transformed into riddles and personal challenges when they are combined with adventurous story line: an example of this is demonstrated in the last section this chapter. An imaginative solution was developed in the play-world of "Alien R2" in one of our multi-age groups. The "Alien R2" (a teacher in role) appeared among children one morning speaking in an "alien language". One of the teachers was able to 'translate' that the alien's space ship was crashed. Children offered their help and started to plan a new space ship for the alien. With the helps of the teachers, the children established a "space laboratory" in the classroom where different "fuels" were tested and "space helmets" developed. One boy brought an old television set from home and it was turned into a steering mechanism of the space ship. The space ship was made from a huge carton box and it was launched with the power of imagination.

The Boundary between Imagined and Real

In stories and tales space is often divided into outside and inside worlds. For example, in a classic folk tale the hero is presented in a home-like environment. The door divides the space between home and the hostile, challenging outside world. This is a necessary element because without meeting the challenges he cannot return back as a hero (Ashliman, 2004; MacCulloch, 2006; Propp, 1968). The tension between the two worlds is constructed using different symbolic tools. This same logic is present in play-worlds.

An example is the play-world "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe" based on the story of Lewis Carroll. Children were ready to meet the "White queen" (a teacher in role) outside the school building (there was a lot of snow as in the original story). The children changed their winter boots and jackets and were ready to step out. Suddenly one boy made a remark: "But if we go out now we are not any more in "Narnia". The whole group made a round through "The Wardrobe" and only then went on to the schoolyard. The symbolic tool dividing the classroom and "Narnia" was a big carton box fixed at the door opening between two rooms.

The divider between worlds was constructed with a whole set of symbolic tools also in the play-world of "Rumpelstiltskin" based on Brothers Grimm folk tale (Hakkarainen 2008). The tale was presented so that the characters visited the group one by one in a week's intervals. Each character (acted by the teachers) told the story from her or his point of view and telling different versions of the same events created the basic tension. When the king's herald (teacher in role) arrived to the classroom he started to talk backwards. The children found out that "Rumpelstiltskin" had got angry and cast a spell, which turned everything upside down in the imaginative kingdom of "Surmundia".

In a joint effort, the children found out that all 365 rooms in the king's court were turned upside down and everyone in the kingdom talked backwards. The king asked in his letter if the children could visit the court in disguise and help to solve a task in each room to restore its normal order. A set of symbolic tools created the boundary between real world and upside down world. Trespassing the boundary was possible by (1.) Turning the jacket outside in, (2.) Entering the imaginative kingdom by walking backwards, and (3.) Talking the opposite. Children found most of the "real" tasks in the imaginative world, but returned to solve them in the "real" world of the classroom.

Conclusions

The stage model of child development by El'konin (1971) evoked a lively discussion after the publication of the article. In this discussion there were several themes and subthemes. Perhaps most discussion raised the idea of leading activity system as the criterion of each stage. In other words at each stage one activity type mediates the impact of all activities of the child to general development. For example play activity

mediates all impacts of child's activity in play age. Each stage was divided into two periods: motivational and technical. But details about transition from one stage to another were quite scarce. Vygotsky's general idea was that at the transitions motivation of the previous stage loose significance in a child's life and a new motivation replaces it. But how these two opposite directions of development proceed is still unanswered.

The main criterion of each activity type presupposes different motivation at each stage. The concept and explanation of motivation El'konin adopted from Leont'ev, but his explanation is problematic when applied to play. A central mechanism of constructing motivation is "finding an appropriate object" of the activity system. It seems to us that an appropriate object is the subject of play activity. Apparently subject's need finds the object of play activity in the subject. The object of learning activity is easier to find outside the subject and thus construct the traditional subject – object relation between them. Perhaps it would be more logical to describe the transition as moving from subject – subject relations to subject – object relations.

How play–world approach suits for the construction of transitory activity system between pretend play and adult assisted school learning? Polivanova's (2000) proposal about ideal forms of the next stage as the first pre-critical step of transition sounds fruitful. Play-worlds are constructed using classic tales and stories as the imaginative content. This content reveals to children crystallized ideal forms of acting and tells about human basic values behind these acts. Subject – subject relations children construct in play first as the relation between 'real child' and 'child in role'. Later subject relations are constructed between several roles of pretend play.

What are ideal forms introduced to children in our play-worlds? Classic tales and stories reveal to children human basic values without moralizing. In other words events of the stories often hide the values behind the chain of happening and emotional reaction may guide the children to the values. In these cases the emotional reaction is correct, but the child cannot name the moral value. In classic tales the hero wants unselfishly help other people in their troubles. Combining realistic problem solving with play-world stories adds 'a reality test' to children's solutions. Children help the characters of the story solving realistic problems and the story can go on.

Children collide in the play-world environment with a problem, which prevents to continue the storyline. They leave the play-world, move to the classroom and have a week's time to solve the problem using realistic methods. Play-world problems are intertwined with the storyline and the whole class or subgroups solve it. We emphasize children's social interaction and relations as an essential element of learning. Teacher's work focuses on children's interaction, dialogues and argumentation in problem solving. Individual, narrow tasks are avoided as much as possible. These didactic principles are derived from Vygotsky's general genetic law, in which he argues that new higher mental functions first are born in social interaction (interpsychologically). Internalization of these functions on individual level takes place after interpsychological stage.

Finnish success in international school achievement comparisons from the beginning of the new millennium has been the reason for false conclusions concerning the quality of our early childhood and comprehensive school education. But the Finnish system is a day care system, which reform has started in 2013. The most remarkable feature of this system is comparatively low participation. A significant part of children before the age of six are at home outside any educational program. There are no systematic studies on the impact of educational programs or lack of programs on child development. Less than 200 children/year leave the school before the ninth grade and at the age of 14 children excel in three school subjects in international PISA comparisons. But about 1% of the Finnish youth (15 – 29 years) is totally alienated (they are not in professional education, work life or receive social support) according to official statistics (Myrskylä, 2011).

Have we not succeeded to construct the motivational basis of life long learning at preschool age. At the first glance emigrant and foster family children are overrepresented among alienated youth. Direct cause – effect relations hardly can be detected, but we badly need new approaches to the research of crisis periods and motivation construction.

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CHAPTER 7

WHO YOU ARE IS WHERE YOU ARE:
URBAN YOUTH'S CONTEXT-DEPENDENT
EXPERIENCES OF THE IMPORTANT LIFE ASPECTS

Svetlana Jović

Who You Are Is Where You Are: Urban Youth's Context-Dependent Experiences of the Salient Aspects of Their Lives

Who young people are, how they feel about it, and how they enact who they are, varies widely across different contexts of their daily lives. The purpose of the current inquiry is to research how youth's experiences of themselves and the most important aspects of their lives change across different social environments, and to explore the nature of the contexts which make adolescents feel either distressed or comfortable with who they are.

There has been a growing corpus of multidisciplinary research in the past couple of decades leading to understanding the complexity and diversity of the context sensitive nature of youth development (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993; Heath, 2004; Larson, 2000; Lerner, 2004). In that spirit, developmental researchers started questioning prior assumptions and stereotypes about adolescents as *being* troublesome, maladapted, resistant to authorities, in a burdensome quest for their own identity, etc. (Buchanan & Holmbeck, 1998; Nichols & Good, 2004); and instead, focusing on context-dependent and situationally shifting experiences of oneself (Daiute, 2010a; Lucić, 2012). The current inquiry is a step in this context sensitive direction of developmental research.

My decade-long experience in the youth participation and community organizing work inspired and significantly shaped this current inquiry. I have worked at several youth organizations, in three different countries, and one of the things that could be observed in all these environments is how differently young people act as they participate in community organizations' activities, compared to their 'performance' in other daily activities, that is, in other contexts in their lives. As many young people that I worked with noticed and reported — which is also corroborated by previous

research—they were much more self-confident, outgoing, collaborative, respectful, etc. while participating in the work of an organization, than they were in many other settings in their lives (Hirsch, 2005; McLaughlin, 2000). The notion of youth's within-person diversity questions the understanding of (young) people as "possessors" of certain relatively stable personality traits (that may change from one 'developmental stage' to the other) that are being manifest in their behaviors irrespective of the surrounding environment. The way I use the concept of *environment* is beyond physical properties as defined by an outside observer; it is a constellation of physical and psychosocial elements and their relations defined from the point of view of the actor (Bruner, 1990).

What this within-person diversity notion calls for is an approach to theorizing/ researching youth's development that would shift the focus from looking at the isolated individual, and young people as the source of the problems, to studying *environments* through which youth navigate in their daily lives that entice them to *perform*[1] as different persons. I hypothesized that the context would influence the sense youth make about the most salient aspects of their lives (e.g. family, learning, being a volunteer), which would lead to different context-depended experiences of these various aspects. As it will be illustrated with the data, young people can have very contrasting experiences in relation to one same aspect of their life, such as their ethnic background, or academic aspiration. Some environments have the potential to make them feel great about these aspects, and some other environments will make them feel distressed and lead them to conceal or minimize the importance of these life-aspects.

This shift in focus can have very constructive and powerful implications in terms of informing our (researchers'/practitioners') thinking about environments in which youth grow, and helping us create spaces and approaches that will promote positive development of young people. What I hope this chapter achieves is illustrating how important aspects of one's life can be associated with either comfort or distress, depending on the prominent psychosocial dynamics operating in a particular situation, and extrapolating the characteristics of youth's everyday environments which have a potential of making them feel good or bad about who they are/what they do. The additional goal of the current inquiry is looking at a community youth organization from which the study participants were recruited, and exploring the characteristics of that environment which make it particularly development-promoting.

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[1]   I use the term *performance,* that is, *performing* instead of *being* who we are in order to emphasize the dynamic and fluid nature of who we are (for further discussion of this concept look Holzman, 1999; Holzman & Mendez, 2003).

Who You Are Is Where You Are

Attributing people's behavior to intraindividual characteristics removes the responsibility that social, cultural, political, and economic structures have in who we are and how we come to be as individuals. I use a sociocultural theoretical framework, which offers a resistance to still pervasive individualist approaches where "it's what's inside" the person that matters the most. Instead, in sociocultural approach the individual is regarded as interdependent with society; it explores how human behavior is socially and culturally constituted (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole, 2006; Rogoff, 2003).

People exist in communities and in relationships, and they are constantly attuned to the feelings, thoughts and actions of others. People's actions and the ways of being, depend upon, reflect, foster, and institutionalize these sociocultural affordances and influences. "[A]s people actively construct their worlds, they are [being] made up of, or "constituted by," relations with other people and by the ideas, practices, products, and institutions that are prevalent in their social contexts" (Markus & Hamedani, 2007). A sociocultural approach implies that, while studying psychological phenomena, we should, first, acknowledge that human behavior that we are studying is not a product of a single or multiple 'mental' characteristics/traits; and second, explore the ways in which behavior is constructed and influenced by various sociostructural aspects of the context. Therefore, a sociocultural inquiry should focus on exploring *how* psychological processes may be explicitly and implicitly shaped by the contexts, worlds, or cultural systems that people inhabit.

Consistent with this theoretical approach, conflicts that youth experience would stem not only from them as young, 'misunderstood', 'confused' and 'problematic' persons, and their families, but from the society at large. Thus, understanding how we could improve young people's lives and allow for their positive development should go beyond the understanding of how to 'correct' the individual. Development, as a "revolutionary activity," is inseparable from understanding and creating environments for development (Newman & Holzman, 1999). The individual should be considered *in-the-world*; in relation to various others, and various contexts of their daily lives.

In my work, I use a dynamic notion of environment laid down by Gesell (1928) and Vygotsky (1994), and appropriated by contemporary sociocultural scholars. This notion regards individual and environment as interdependent - they should not be viewed as distinct, separate factors that can in some way be added up to explain the individual's development and behavior. Rather, we should regard individual and environment as factors that mutually shape each other in a process of growth. Environment is a situated activity (Bruner, 1990) in which various psychosocial dynamics take place. It cannot be described solely from the outsider's perspective; rather, in order to understand environment, we need to take into account the insider's perspective – what is the sense that an actor makes about a particular physical-psychosocial environment, that

is, about a situated activity in which he or she partakes. There can hardly be a better way of looking into people's sense-making processes than looking at the way they use narrating as a tool for constructing and sharing meaning.

Hence, how do we facilitate the creation of environments in which young people can grow and develop? An extensive list could be made of scholarly (Larson, 2000; Piaget, 1955; Ramsey, 1987) and practical (usually related to youth activist work; Goździk-Ormel, 2008; Loncle & Muniglia, 2008) endeavors in answering this question. What is still not prevalent in youth research is asking, listening to, and analyzing in-depth youth's voices about what it is that makes them feel good or bad in different environments of which they are a part. By eliciting and hearing youth's narratives we can learn about how they interact in their environments and how they make sense about relevant social interactions in their lives. The design elicited and analyzed youth's narratives both about the best and the worst experiences in relation to the most important aspects of their lives with the aim of "profiling" the psychosocial environments in which they feel good – *development-promoting*, and those in which they feel distressed – *development-inhibiting* (Garcia Coll et al., 1996) environments.

What I hope this inquiry illuminates is what it is that makes youth experience comfort in relation to one life aspect in one setting, and yet distress in relation to the same aspect when different psychosocial environment is created. To illustrate this problem with an actual example from the study – what is it about the contexts that can make a 17-year old young man of Puerto Rican descent feel either good or bad about the fact that he writes poems and loves poetry, which he identified as one of the most important aspects of his life? These opposing experiences of the important aspects of one's life happen across different material settings in youth's daily lives – school, neighborhood, youth organization, and so on – showing that each of these settings has a potential to facilitate comfort and to serve as an obstacle to the youths' wellbeing, depending on the psychosocial dynamics unfolding in a particular situation. All this may be particularly emphasized, and of special importance in cases of minority youth (who are the participants in this study) since they navigate through rather diverse sociocultural environments that may dictate different, and even contrasting, expectation from them it terms of the desirable ways of *knowing* and *being*.

Youth Organization as a Research Site

The youth organization (YO) from which the study participants were recruited was chosen as an exemplar of a development-promoting environment, which could provide some insights about the features of the context that allows young people to flourish. The YO as a 'variable' was found to be far more significant for this research study than it had been intended by the initial design, granting it a much higher and more central status than the one of a research site.

The YO is around 30-years old non-governmental youth organization offering diverse out-of-school developmental programs for inner-city youth. The organization is based in an affluent neighborhood of a metropolis in the northeast of the United States of America, and it gathers underprivileged youth from inner-cities. The mission statement of the YO is the promotion of human development through the use of a performance-based model drawing from a (neo)Vygotskian cultural-historical theory of development. YO's programs include non-school like educational, that is, learning activities that are based in a developmental understanding of performance—both on and off stage—as fostering emotional and social development (Holzman, 2008).

Many of the YO's tenet ideas stem from Vygotsky's concept of the *zone of proximal development,* and *performing a head taller than you are* (Vygotsky, 1978). One of the key concepts in this organization's approach is *performance,* understood as the capacity to transform ourselves into something that we are not, and that we could *become*; performing in the zone of our proximal development. Development is regarded as the activity of creating who you are by performing *who you are not* (for the theoretical ideas implemented in the YO's work look Holzman (1999) and other work of the same author). The organization highly values the sense of community and collaboration, which, based on my findings, proved to have an immense effect on the youth involved.

I was very familiar with the work of this organization and I was curious to learn why so many young people stay there for years, and continue volunteering there even after they become "overaged" for participating in the youth programs. It seemed like a good model for what could be called a development-promoting environment, or environment for growth; and amongst my other research questions, I wanted to learn about the particularities of that place.

Making Sense of Diverse Contexts

What is in the core of the sociocultural approach are the ideas of the interdependence of the individual with the social, the material, and the historical, and the emphasis on people's sense-making (and sense-sharing) capacities. Narrative scholars often use the terms *sense-making* and *meaning-making* interchangeably (Bhatia, 2011; Daiute, 2011; 2014) to refer to the process of using narratives and narrating to interact with life and self; to figure out what is going on in the environment, and where and how does one fit. What Bruner's work (1990; 1991) had opened up for many scholars is the simple, but powerful idea that people use narrative to make sense of their lives and their sense-making activity is deeply shaped by their cultural settings. Therefore, there can hardly be a better avenue for looking into people's sense-making processes than looking at language people use – looking at the ways in which people *make* and *use* stories to interpret the world.

Rather than being a window into people's minds and hearts, narrating is a cultural tool (like other discourse genres and symbol systems) for managing (mediating) self-society relationships (Daiute, 2014; Gergen, 2001). Narrating provides a mechanism for analyzing the relationship between individual and sociocultural setting; in a sense, they make it possible for the sociocultural context to be "imported" into individual mental functioning. Narratives are social products produced by people in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations (Ewick & Silbey, 1995; McNay, 2000).

In this inquiry I used narrative as a tool for understanding how people make sense of the most important aspects of their lives, and of the best and worst experiences related to them. I wanted to explore how psychosocial characteristics of the situation involving a particular life aspect (e.g. learning, being Haitian) influence the sense youth make about that aspect, which mediates youth's emotional experience of it (e.g. feeling good or distressed about the fact that they love school, or that they are of the Caribbean descent).

I further hypothesized that learning about the psychosocial characteristics of the contexts in which young people feel great about themselves could help us facilitate creation of environments in which young people can grow and develop by feeling comfortable with who they are and what they bring to the practices in which they participate. What I did not anticipate prior to collecting and analyzing the data, is that the research would also bring some interesting findings about the ways in which "feeling very bad" about something can offer a space for development and growth; but, only under certain psychosocial circumstances, which will be discussed in the data analysis section.

The main research questions I explored were:

- *What are the most salient aspects of inner-city youth's lives?*

This question is aimed at eliciting the most important and most self-defining aspects of one's life. Given the subsequent and central research question in this study aimed at exploring the nature of psychosocial environments in which youth feel either good or bad, I have a two-fold reason for looking at the most important life-aspects. First, I think asking questions about concrete things in youth's life embedded in real-life settings is much more meaningful than asking youth about psychosocial environments in general, abstract from the real-life content. Secondly, in order to learn about the features of the environments that have potential for making us feel good or bad about ourselves, in a profound and meaningful way, we should look at the situations in which *important* aspects of our lives are engaged. It is less significant for our wellbeing how we feel about some little important aspects of our life, such as preference for the mobile service provider or our favorite dog breed, than how we fell about our family or the career choice.

- *What are the characteristics of social environments that make young people feel comfortable/distressed about these particular life aspects?*

The answer to this question should help us learn about what it is that makes youth feel good about particular aspects in some environments and yet bad in some others. To use the actual examples from the study – what is it about the contexts that would make a young person feel either good or bad about their socio-economic background or about the fact that they love school and have academic aspirations?

- *What is the sense young people make about the community youth organization and their participation in it?*

I wanted to explore the role that the YO had in adolescents' lives; the impact it had on the young people involved; and the features that make this YO development promoting.

Method

Research Design

The main data used in this study were adolescents' narratives, and the main method of analysis was the *narrative analysis approach*. Maybe the most simple and most compelling reason I could give for using narratives in social science research is that they offer a great means of exploring the ways in which social actors interpret the world, and their place within it (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Daiute & Nelson, 1997; Daiute, 2010b). Given that people's behavior depends on the meanings they actively contribute to their experience (Bruner, 1990), inquiry into sense-making processes can be much more informative than looking at behavior at the descriptive level, without knowing what that behavior means for the individual at the given time and context. What is perceptible – what can be observed – is not all there is to say; the interpretive level – how the individuals see and experience the social world – is much more interesting and revealing.

Narrative does not refer to a story that carries 'facts' about what 'really happened.' Rather, as stated earlier, I see narratives as social products created by people within the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations (Cortazzi, 1993; Lawler, 2002: Riessman, 1993). A great significance of narrative lies in its importance for linking the individual and the social. People are not free to construct narratives "at will" (Ewick & Silbey, 1995; McNay, 2000); the narratives produced by individuals would make no sense if they did not dialogue with broader collective stories. Finally, narratives are interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and their worlds to themselves and to others (Lawler, 2002).

Narratives by young people were elicited through the 'storyboard' they were asked to create for the movie about their life. The YO uses a performance-based model in working with young people, which is why simulating the context of performing arts seemed like an appropriate and potentially very engaging context in which the research activities could be embedded. The youth's stories are the main data in this study and narrative analysis approach will be used as the method of analysis. Narrative analysis is a form of discourse analysis designed to understand the *content* and *structure* of the stories we tell, as well as the dynamics of narrative *use*, using the story itself as the unit of analysis.

Participants and recruitment

The participants in this study were 13 young people involved in the work of the YO. I recruited all young people that were involved in one of the projects that the YO offers, and everybody who was willing to participate and whose parents signed the parental permission form (in cases where they were minors) was interviewed. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 20 years (7 men and 6 women; mean age = 18). All participants were from low income neighborhoods of a city in the Northeast, and came from ethnically diverse backgrounds: African-American (6), Hispanic (4), South Asian (2), and South-East European (1).

Materials and Procedure

The main data collection technique was semi-structured in-depth interview. The interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length. All the interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed by the author. I wanted to create a socially situated prompt—a movie 'storyboard'—that would tap into the most important aspects of one's life. Part of the instruction reads:

> *Try to imagine that one of your friends becomes a movie director and wants to make a movie about you and your life. Think about what is it that you would like people your age to know about how you live your life. Think about the most important activities/things that you do in your life that show who you are. [...] what it is that should be in that movie and how important it is?*

In the first part of the interview participants were asked to list and write down the most important things that they do in their life (which I earlier referred to as 'life aspects'). Following that, the participants talked about each of the activities they had listed, and they were also asked to come up with the stories about the **best** and **worst** times related to each activity they had listed; they were asked about the characteristics

of environments which made them feel extremely good or bad: *Could you tell me about the best/worst times related to learning* [for example]*? What was about that situation that made you feel so good/bad?* This part was designed and included with the aim of eliciting more complex narratives about each important life aspect, and getting insights about the diverse ways in which these life aspects can be played out in various situations.

Most people have had positive and negative experiences, and asking them to narrate about both invites them to consider more or less ideal situations. When just asked to narrate about their life, people tend to put their best selves out there in their stories; they seek a sense of self-worth by making stories that portray them as attractive and competent (Oliviera, 1999). When I asked them to narrate about the best experiences, I offered the stage for exemplary materials presenting the participants and their lives in the best light; which very likely would have happened had I asked them to tell me about their life without directing them to tell me the worst and best experiences.

What would be less likely to happen is hearing the stories about "difficult" or "the worst experiences." Nonetheless, when researchers ask explicitly about the "worst" times, it provides a relatively protected environment for interviewees to share personal experience; when we use the word "bad" or "worst," we acknowledge the fact that situations are not always ideal, which opens people to expressing difficulties or negative *aspects of self or local milieu* (Daiute, 2014). Besides, by varying the emotional context of youth's experiences I was able to contrast positive and negative experiences, and differentiate psychosocial environments that make them feel good from those that make them feel particularly bad about important life aspects.

Narrative Analysis

The first analysis I did was examining the nature of the most salient aspects of youth's lives. Next, I conducted a structural narrative analysis (Reissman, 2008) characterized by a top-down approach to the text. In a top-down fashion, smaller excerpts gain its purpose and meaning from the narrative whole; the whole lends meaning to the components of the story and their sequential arrangement. The narratives were examined in terms of the question *what the story is about to the participants* in their ongoing negotiation of what is topically and interactionally relevant. I looked at the interviews in their totality and then coded for the main *psychosocial dynamics* addressed in narratives, that is, the dynamics regarding the interaction between the individual and his or her social environment. As Daiute and Lucić (2010) argued, "the idea behind the psychosocial dynamic analyses is that individuals focus on circumstances in their environments that challenge, confuse, upset, satisfy them, or serve some other function worthy of narrating." The codes were created as answers to the questions: What is the focus of a particular narrative? What

is it, on the relational level of the story that induced comfort/distress? Throughout this text I sometimes refer to these psychosocial dynamics as *relational issues* or *concerns*; the issues that youth are working out through/by narrating.

In order to explore what it is that makes youth feel good about particular life aspects in some contexts, and yet bad in some other situations of their daily lives, the analyses focused primarily on the data that illustrate stories about best ("best time" stories) and worst ("worst time" stories) experiences related to each salient life aspect, and characteristics of environments associated with positive/negative experiences. I analyzed narratives about positive and negative experiences in respect to the most salient psychosocial dynamics going on in them, and I explored the differences in saliency of diverse issues within the stories about best and worst times separately. To the end of exploring the strength of connections between the codes, I employed the code co-occurrence analysis, using Atlas.ti, a computer software program used for qualitative data organization and analysis. Co-occurrence frequencies can be used as a measure of the strength between two codes; terms and concepts that co-occur more frequently tend to be related. I also conducted a deeper analysis of what positive and negative experiences are about in the most important material settings in youth's lives (home, school and YO).

Finally, I conducted the analyses exploring the differences between young people who were new, and those who had much more experience with the YO community and its work. These particular analyses yielded some of the most surprising results.

Results and Interpretation

What is it that You Do that Shows Who You Are?

The first research question, which was also the first question that the participants were asked—w*hat is it that you do that shows who you are?*—informed us about the nature of the aspects that these young people found most important and most self-defining in their life. Most of the participants elicited 5±1 aspects. The most prominent things that *show who you(th) are* in descending order are (numbers of occurrences are in the parentheses)*:* Family (7 out of 13 participants chose Family as one of the most important things in their life); Social Activism/Volunteering (7); School/Learning (7); Leisure (leisure, hobbies, traveling, sports) (7); Friends/Dating/Relationships (5); Arts (4); Work (4); and Youth Organization (3). There were several other aspects that were mentioned only once: Food, God, The City.

Sense-making Around the most Important Life Aspects

After I had elicited these most self-defining aspects of participants' lives, I asked participants to narrate about each of them so I could explore what their experiences are across diverse situations. I was curious to know what the narratives, created around these life aspects, are about, and what are the interactional issues that youth are working out through their narrating. Narrating has a purpose of helping (young) people make sense about various interactions they have with their social environment, and I wanted to see what it is about those interactions that make them most confused, upset, content, or any other feeling that would be worthy narrating about. I will first present the findings based on the entire interviews, and then I will focus on *best time* and *worst time* stories in particular.

Looking for the interactionally most relevant features present in youth's narratives, I identified 22 psychosocial dynamics, each of which recurred multiple times (between 8 and 27 occurrences) throughout the narratives. Table 1 presents 10 most frequent relational issues that participants' narratives revolved around, and respective descriptions based on youth's narratives. It is worth noting here that no matter the manner in which the code names were formulated—with a positive, negative or neutral valence—their valence can be either positive or negative, neutral, and sometimes either one of these three. When a narrative was coded as *support*, for example, that could mean that the story was either about having support from the people that matter, or missing it. When a story concerned *recognition seeking,* the person might be telling about receiving or not recognition for something, or simply searching for it.

The major relational concerns in young people's narratives in entirety were the issues of *recognition seeking* – receiving, or not, a recognition and respect for who they are and for what they do; having or having lacked the *proactive attitude* towards one's own life; their ethnic/racial and/or socio-economic *background/origin*; the sense of *belonging* somewhere; the virtue of *overcoming* difficulties in life, or improving oneself in particular domain, and so on (refer to Table 1 for the rest of the 10 most prominent psychosocial dynamics worked out in youth's narratives).

Table 1: The most Prominent Psychosocial Dynamics Addressed in Youth's Narratives.

Psychosocial Dynamics (number of occurrences)	Description
Recognition Seeking (27)	Need for, lack of, or satisfaction that comes from appraisal, validation, recognition; 'being given credit' for who you are or what you can do.
Proactive Attitude (26)	Agency - proactive stance in life: - Initiating change in oneself and/or one's own life. - Doing something constructive/productive: in narratives, this issue was usually expressed as opposition to 'doing nothing in life' and 'just hanging out.'
Background/ Origin (25)	Refers to the issues related to participants' racial/ethnic, socioeconomic (SES), family, or geographic (neighborhood) background.
Belonging/ Togetherness (23)	Sense of belonging somewhere/'being a part of something bigger'; sense of community; collectivism.
Helping Others (21)	Altruistic ideas of helping people and giving back to various communities to which they belong; helping through the YO, or at school.
Overcoming (21)	Getting stronger; surpassing various difficulties in life; coping with stress; resiliency; becoming better.
Autonomy/ Independence (21)	Having or not being granted enough autonomy and independence.
Being Different/ Unadapted (18)	Being different in certain regard, and therefore not fitting in: being from somewhere else (immigrant); being smart; 'well spoken'; having high academic aspirations; 'being Black and acting White.'
Support (18)	Emphasizing the importance of having or not having support of significant people in life.
Exclusion/ Rejection (16)	Emotional (self-initiated) exclusion, or exclusion by others based on: race/ethnicity; academic performance & academic aspiration; SES; and learning disability.

Here is an excerpt from one of the interviews illustrating the way coding for psychosocial dynamics was conducted. When it comes to the transcription symbols used, "[]" is used for the interviewer's comments; "," refers to shorter, and "..." to longer pauses in speech. The author of this narrative excerpt is Margaret[2] (an 18 years old female), who narrated about the *worst times* in relation to s*chool* as one of the most salient things in her life.

> *I got left back, because I just, I wasn't really into school that much. I felt that, I was really behind when it came to reading, and I think that's when I felt the worst. At that point I was kinda feeling ashamed, I felt that I wasn't really... cause my sister, my older sister, she is a doctor, she's always been the smartest one. And like in my house, being that my parents are Haitian, and they came here from nothing and school was really important to them. And I just felt that I was letting everyone down in my house cause I...I just felt so ashamed. I felt like I couldn't do anything, and that just really messed up my confidence. And that's kind of when I became shy (Margaret, 18 years; YO expert[3]).*

On the content level of the narrative, there are several things going on: Margaret's failure at school; her family's background; academic and career success of her siblings; her insecurity, and so on. What I took as the main relational concern that she was expressing through her narrating is how she felt ashamed because she did not meet her family's expectations from her. Therefore, this narrative was primarily coded as n*ot meeting expectations*; although, since Margaret made a reference to her family's ethnic background, this narrative was also considered while analyzing her sense-making about her ethnic background.

Thus, these were the most important issues interwoven throughout the youth's narratives as they were telling me about the things that matter most in their lives; this is what their wants, excitements, disappointments, affections, prides, misfits, struggles, and strengths were. Nonetheless, the things became more exciting once I complicated them by looking separately at their narratives about best and worst experiences, which opened some new questions that could not be anticipated prior to hearing youth's stories, and conducting the first round of analyses. Let us first see what the best and worst experiences were about.

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[2]   Data are presented using pseudonyms that participants chose for themselves.

[3]   Some participants had joined the organization a week or two prior to being interviewed, and I will refer to them as the YO 'novices'; and the 'expert' participants had been involved with the YO for 1-3 years prior to the interview. This categorization will be relevant for the forthcoming analyses.

What is it that Makes Young People Feel Content/Distressed?

This level of analysis focused specifically on the narratives about the best and worst times experienced in relation to each salient activity that young people elicited. If participants enlisted *volunteering* or *family*, for example, as the most important things in their lives, their narratives were elicited as answers to the question: *Could you tell me about the best/worst times related to family/volunteering?* The aim here was to answer the question about the nature of psychosocial environments that influence either positive or negative experience of one same life aspect. To this end I, first, looked at the most prominent psychosocial dynamics in the narratives about best and worst times. These results came from the Atlas.ti co-occurrence output tables, where I looked at the co-occurrence of each psychosocial dynamics with either *best time* or *worst time* narrative. Figure 1 presents the psychosocial dynamics that have the highest occurrence in the stories about best and worst times respectively.
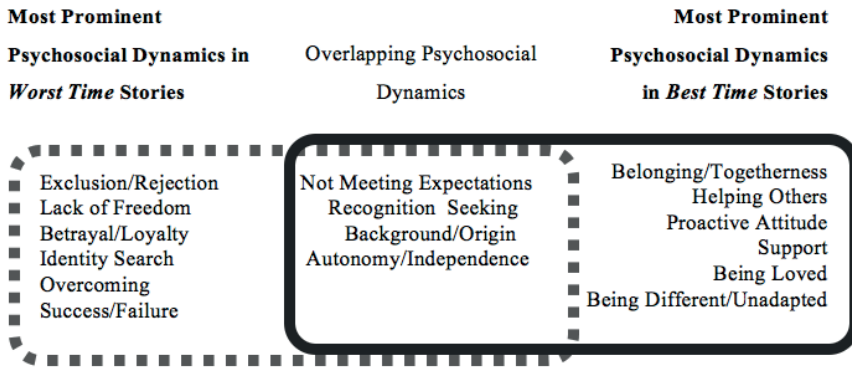

Most Prominent Psychosocial Dynamics in *Worst Time* Stories	Overlapping Psychosocial Dynamics	Most Prominent Psychosocial Dynamics in *Best Time* Stories
▪ Exclusion/Rejection ▪ Lack of Freedom ▪ Betrayal/Loyalty ▪ Identity Search ▪ Overcoming ▪ Success/Failure	Not Meeting Expectations Recognition Seeking Background/Origin Autonomy/Independence	Belonging/Togetherness Helping Others Proactive Attitude Support Being Loved Being Different/Unadapted

Figure 1: The most Important Psychosocial Dynamics Influencing the Experience of Comfort *vs.* Distress.

The most prominent issues in youth's narratives about best times were: the sense of *belonging and togetherness*; being *recognized* and given credit for what they do and who they are as persons; and having the opportunity to *help other people* and/or being in environments that embrace and encourage this value. The most defining factors when it comes to environments where youth experience distress are: *not meeting* one's own or other people's *expectations*; being *excluded or rejected*, either by other people or self-initiatively (although, it could be argued that self-initiated exclusion can very often be reduced to rejection by others); and finally, *background and origin*, which, based on the data, could refer to youth's racial/ethnic origin, socio-economic status, family background, and neighborhood in which they live.

It is interesting to note that rather different sets of issues came up as youth narrated about positive vs. negative experiences. This suggests that there may be different criteria for defining psychosocial environments that make young people feel good and those that make them feel distressed. When it comes to the psychosocial dynamics that have the strongest influence on the young people's experience across different life aspects, there are 4 out of the top 10 dynamics that have strong influence on experiencing both comfort and distress, and they are in the intersection of the two lists of issues presented in Figure 1.

What I named as *belonging/togetherness*, was surely the most important relational feature leading to positive experiences of a particular social context; it was the most salient psychosocial dynamics in the *best time* narratives (occurring 18 times), and was <u>never</u> found in the *worst time* stories. Below is the example of a narrative conveying this issue of togetherness. I purposefully chose this excerpt where the narrative author talks about the *best time* experiences in regards to the YO, which he elicited as one of the most important things in his life. As will be elaborated later, this experience of community created at the YO, that Stefan narrates about, was widely shared by other participants.

> *And I had so many great relationships, and so many people that I met. And I had so many different great experiences. But, what really stuck with me most is the relationships and the friendships that I have over here [YO]. And that's why I keep coming back and volunteering and joining different other programs. To get that exposure and experiences. Also to have that community, the sense of like you belong to something. You are part of something. And that really stuck with me. That's why I've been here for so long. Because like, I just love the community (Stefan, 20 years; YO expert).*

What I decided to focus on next, was the overlapping area in the Figure 2: there are certain things that happen during social interactions (e.g. not meeting someone's expectations), that under some circumstances can be experienced negatively, and in a long run have detrimental effects on young people; but, those same relational features can be experienced in a positive manner and have a potential for enhancing youth's development, when experienced in some other social environments. Unpacking the nature of these social environments was, actually, the main goal I had set for this research endeavor. Surprisingly, youth's negative experiences led me towards the ideas about what a development-promoting environment could look like.

Developmental potential of negative experiences. I looked at the issues present in the best time narratives, and started wondering what were some negative things doing there, such as *not meeting expectations* (which is the most prominent issue in the *bad time* narratives), first of all, and *being different* and a misfit. If negative experiences are not

necessarily related to distress, is there, and what is their developmental potential. I wanted to see under which circumstances can 'feeling bad' be developmental. I went over all *best time* and *worst time* narratives involving the concern of *not meeting expectations,* and looked at the broader setting surrounding the particular narratives. The material narrative settings where the stories about unmet expectations took place were school, home and the YO. I looked for patterns of how this particular issue played out in these three settings.

When it comes to **school**, *not meeting expectations* was <u>always</u> experienced negatively. In this context, the expectations set for youth were either low, or in conflict with the ways in which they wanted to position themselves. Present in the narratives of several participants was the struggle they experience, especially in interactions with peers, when they want to identify as learners, and when they have academic ambitions. These aspirations can be met with strong peer disapproval leading to rejection from the peer group and/or self-initiated exclusion; or, to some other strategies of playing down this important life aspect – of being inclined towards learning and being academically motivated. The following narrative excerpts, authored by Blair (18 years old female) should illustrate the complexity of these issues. These selections are parts of her longer elaboration on what learning and education mean to her, which eventually evolved into a discussion on what it means to be Black and what it means to be White, and what societal and peer expectations are from a young Black (female) person.

There were Black people asking me 'Why do you sound White?' And I mean, I still don't understand it, because it's like, when I ask myself why can't I sound intelligent I feel like I'm insulting them, saying that they sound stupid. And it's like I don't want to insult them because I don't think you sound stupid. But when I wanna think about it, that's what it, I feel that's how it's coming out. And, I'm just not used to that whole...thing. It's just [laughs]...it's strange. I mean, I don't know. [...]

I think that they think, what people think...I think people should...the way I dress, the way I act, I think people should think that I'm probably trying to act White. To be like completely honest, cause I mean, I used to skateboard, I used to...I listen to rock music, I mean, I listen to a lot of different music, but people assume that only thing that I listen to is rock. And, it's just like, I like wearing black, and like, I think people who see me think that I should, that I'm trying to be White, or I'm just trying to be something I'm not, which is not true. And, I think they expect me to be loud and obnoxious, and everything. You know how, I mean, teenagers are like that, all races of teenagers are like that, and I'm not; I'm very reserved, I don't like talking loudly at all, I don't like, I mean I'm very social person, or 'polite' is more of the word. [...]

And it's just, I don't know how they expect me, how do you expect someone to be. Like, why is, I think Black and acting White two different things. I don't know [laugh]. I don't know if I'm answering your question. But, I don't know (Blair, 18 years; YO novice).

Blair's reflection offers an amazing account of the tensions that many minority youth experience on the daily level in the contemporary urban context, and it also helps us understand why school is a setting where not meeting expectations is never experienced in a good manner. For many minority youth (who do not come from the middle-class socioeconomic background), school and home may have rather different expectations about what and how a young person should *be*. These two cultures (of school and home) often embrace and value different linguistic (Heath, 1983; 1990; Labov, 1972; Lee, 2005), cognitive and knowledge acquisition styles (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994), and problem solving preferences (Bell, 1994). Further, African Americans have historically defined academic success as White people's prerogative, and discouraged their group members from "emulating" White people in academic striving. Because of the ambivalence in regards to academic effort and achievement, and social pressures, Black students (even those who may have great academic potential) do not invest enough effort and persistence in their school work, so they wouldn't be labeled as "acting White" by their peers and/or other community members (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Blair's narrative offers a great illustration of these conflicting ways of *knowing* and *being* that collide in the school context making it a place where unmet expectations have no development-promoting potential.

Further, one of the prominent and concrete things identified in youth's narratives that can lead to negative experience of not being able to meet someone else's expectations in the school, and family setting, for that matter, is the lack of support. I will elaborate more on this point when I discuss *family* and *YO* settings.

Family is another setting where adolescents often experience disappointment and embarrassment of not living up to the expectations of the close ones. In the stories of these young people, their family's expectations were either too high, or in a sharp conflict with what participants wanted from their own education and life. Further, the lack of support was very salient in numerous narratives, across several participants, indicating that this was a very much shared struggle.

> *I would like to pursue career in music. To enter the music and entertainment industry is kind of difficult but everybody like, it's hard to you know, find support, you know, because everybody doesn't think I could make it. Everybody doesn't think the same way that I think. And it was kind of hard because there was many times where I would find opportunities to go to places and they just wouldn't let me go and like my mom just wouldn't give me permission. My parents they just wouldn't...they would be like: "You could do something better" and I would lose like a lot of opportunities. [...] I feel that they should give me little bit of support, like telling me 'you can do it,' 'you can make it' and it's just like, they just don't think it's a career. They think I should choose another profession or career. They think that anybody could sing and dance.*

*Like 'why do you think that's professional?' and I feel like that's just the way I
would like to express myself and just doing that every day in my future would
be a fantastic idea (Maria, 17 years; YO novice).*

*My whole family was never support[ive]...they don't like...they just wish I didn't
do music. I don't know what it is, they just... My whole family is immigrants.
They all came...So, last thing they want me to do is do music. I should be a
doctor, or lawyer, or...you know. So, they don't really support it (Lyric, 18
years; YO expert).*

Thus, as participants narrated about the experiences taking place at home and
school, the relational feature of *not meeting expectations* was experienced negatively
since it was often accompanied with several other negative experiences such as: lack
of respect they get – both from peers and adults; being rejected; being judged based
on various group memberships (being stereotyped); and, most importantly – lack
of support. I believe that the issue of support had the crucial effect when it comes
to participants' positive experiences of *not meeting expectations* in the context of
the **community youth organization**. Youth talked often about high expectations set
for them at the YO, challenging them continuously to be on time, to be reliable and
responsible, to be sensitive to other people and their needs, and so on.

*[T]here was one time, the orientation seminar. I came really really late and
that's because [...] I thought I would have enough time. But, I live in X, and my
high-school is in Y.[4] [...] By the time I got there, I was so late that it was like 'You
know, you have to reapply.' And that just like really, just like...really had a really
strong impact on me. It's probably...it's like, it had a really negative impact
on me, like to want to be punctual, cause like, I just had this remembrance of
how bad I felt on that day (Stefan, 20 years; YO expert).*

Stefan narrated here about the <u>worst</u> experiences related to the YO. He was
expelled from the program because he was late for the first orientation meeting, and
he had to reapply the following semester. Stefan is also one of the YO 'veterans,' who,
at the time when the interview was conducted, had been involved with the YO for over
3 years. He also elicited YO as one of the most significant life aspects. The failure to fill
the expectation that YO set for him <u>was not</u> interpreted as rejection or lack of respect
or care. What cannot be inferred from this excerpt, but can be traced in many other
narratives, is that the demands that YO imposes are met with <u>supportive pressure</u> to

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4   *X* and *Y* refer to the names of two remote parts of the city.

meet high expectations. Failure to meet certain expectations, joined with lack of support, led to very negative experiences as illustrated with the narrative analyses regarding family and school setting. Gloria's words well summarize the points I am trying to make.

> *It's like being able to be someone else and yourself at the same time, without being judged. You walk into YO and as you walk through the door an...the environment changes. I mean everything; the air changes, the smiles, you get smiles! [...] It allows kids and people of all ages to just not be afraid to... live outside of their comfort zone and create a new comfort zone. And to live outside of that again. You know, one thing that I learned is to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. That's the only way that you'll get to develop (Gloria; 20 years; YO expert).*

The YO creates environment in which youth feel that they are *a priori* respected and given credit for what they can, or could do, with adequate support of the community they create. I will say more about the YO in the following section where I address directly the question about the sense young people make about the YO, and the effect it has on their lives.

Youth Organization as an Environment for Growth

> *In the beginning it was like all about support. That's what drew me, and the fact that, because, I felt like an outcast, but when I came to the YO people accepted me for who I was. And that just made me feel really god about myself and I felt like I was a part of something (Stefan).*

In addition to the analyses described in the previous section, here are two more aspects of the data that I explored. Just like with the stories about the best and worst times, I wanted to see what were the most salient relational features that came up as participants narrated about the YO; what were the most prominent psychosocial dynamics in their recounts of the experiences with the YO. Given the mission statement of the YO, it came as no surprise that the most prominent concerns that youth brought up were: *proactive attitude* (8 co-occurrences with the topic of YO), *helping others* (7), *doing something constructive/productive* (5), and *belonging/togetherness* (3). However, this is not where the story ends.

Comparing the effect of the prolonged experience with the YO was not one of the original purposes of this research design. Nonetheless, having 5 participants who had joined the organization a week or two prior to being interviewed ('novices'), and 8 participants who had been involved for 1-3 years ('experts'), offered a wonderful

opportunity to compare these two groups. Figures 2 and 3 present the most salient psychosocial dynamics for novices and experts respectively. For each salient issue included in the charts, there is its occurrence among both novices and experts, with the aim of comparing and contrasting the difference in prominence of the same issue among these two groups of participants. Figure 2, for instance, presents the top 6 issues in the narratives of novices. Next to the number of occurrences of each issue among novices is a number of that issue's occurrences in the narratives of experts.
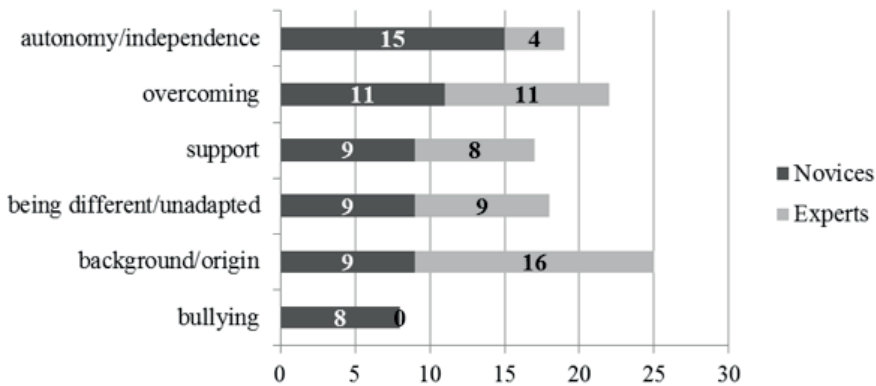

Figure 2: The most Salient Psychosocial Dynamics Among the YO Novices.

The same logic applies to Figure 3, which presents the most prominent concerns addressed in experts' narratives, and it can be observed how they use narrating to convey rather different issues in comparison to the YO novices.
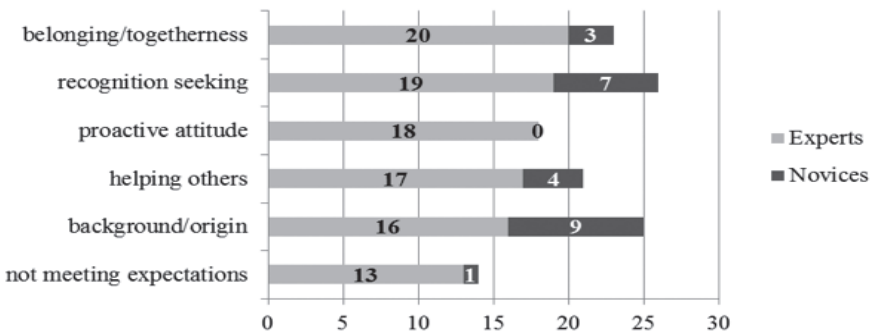

Figure 3: The most Salient Psychosocial Dynamics Among the YO.

When the experts and the novices are compared, we can see that there are differences in terms of what fulfills and satisfies these two groups, on one hand, and what challenges and upsets them, on the other. As Stefan's introductory quotation implies – *In the beginning it was like all about support* – the meaning that the YO has for the youth evolve greatly as their involvement progresses. It could be hypothesized that at the beginning of youth's involvement, the YO has, in a sense, a reparative function – it deals with the most 'burning' issues with which the youth is struggling: need for autonomy, for support, bullying.[5] Once the YO participation provides needed support and empowerment, youth shift their focus towards the issues that are much more related to the values promoted at that setting.

Proactive attitude is one of the most frequently mentioned issues for the entire sample, and yet, it is mentioned solely in the narratives of young people who had been at the YO for a longer period of time. The psychosocial dynamics of *not meeting expectations*, which I discussed extensively in the previous section, was only once mentioned in the narratives of novices (Figure 3). The issue of *belonging/togetherness* is another example of a relational feature that youth become attuned to only after they have spent certain amount of time within the YO community.

Conclusion

This study informed us about some characteristics of psychosocial environments through which urban minority youth navigate on daily basis. It also showed how different environments do indeed induce very different—or even opposing—experiences of the most important aspects of their lives. Some of the most prominent relational features leading to youth's negative experiences were failure to meet expectations, either one's own or expectations set for them by the significant people in their lives; being excluded or rejected; and not receiving respect and recognition for who they are and what they can do. At the other end, the narratives about the best experiences are conveying rather different relational concerns – the sense of belonging somewhere and being a part of something bigger; taking an active role in one's own life; and having strong support, being among the most prevalent ones.

Overall, the analyses show that there are rather different clusters of psychosocial dynamics dominating the narratives about the best times, on one hand, and the narratives about the worst times, on the other. Thus, we could theorize that there are different sets of

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[5]   Bullying, as one of the most prominent issues among novices, was never brought up it the stories of experts.

criteria used for defining good – development-promoting, and bad – development-inhibiting environments. "Good" and "bad" environments are not mirror images; they are not simply the opposites. One of the implications of this finding could be that since good is not defined as the opposite, that is, the absence of bad, by eliminating what makes young people feel particularly bad (e.g. rejection, exclusion), will not automatically create environment where these urban minority youth would thrive and feel content with who they are.

This study's findings offer some suggestions about the things that could be put in place in order to create development-promoting environment, such as: promoting and establishing the value of community and being a part of something 'bigger'; making youth feel respected and accepted, given credit for who they are and what they can do; empowering and allowing them to take an active stance in their own life and in the lives of communities to which they belong; creating and facilitating the activities in a way that provides enough support, but also allows the space for independence and personal expression; and so on. After- and out-of-school youth programs, although it could ambitiously be said the non-formal and formal educational systems in general, could benefit from the insights offered by this study.

Besides the finding that the issues constituting best and worst experiences were to a great extent different, there were still some important relational features prominent both in the narratives about positive and negative experiences. I focused on the most dominant issue in the worst time stories – *not meeting expectations,* which was also present in the stories about the best times. This relational feature was very differently experienced across different material settings – school, home (family) and YO. Failure to meet expectations is always experienced negatively, but this negative feeling could also have a learning potential in particular psychosocial environments. In interpersonal situations created at home or at school, this feeling of failure is intense and always accompanied by other negative experiences such as rejection and lack of care and respect. Nonetheless, this sense of failure to meet expectations is experienced rather differently in the setting of the YO.

The YO provides young people with a strong sense that they are worthy of respect; that the YO community cares strongly about them and their future; that they are a part of the community and that their contribution matters. Therefore, the pressure and continuous demands that the YO imposes are accompanied with strong support and care. Young people feel that the YO, through the demands it imposes, gives them much more credit than other settings do (e.g. school). The YO pushes them to *live out of their comfort zone*, as Gloria said. I see this as a way in which the YO operationalizes and enacts Vygotsky's principle of zone of proximal development and scaffolded interaction with the more competent ones (Vygotsky, 1978). It challenges youth *to perform a head taller than they are*; it charges them with progressively higher demands and responsibilities. However, these high demands are met with a strong sense of community and support,

which influences that young people perceive them as something that is beneficial and developmental for them, in a long run. What is remarkable, though, is how the high expectations set by youth's family, which are also accompanied by their family's care, is not experienced in the same sense in which the pressure from the YO is. This would surely be an interesting direction to take in future research.

The findings also provided some insights about the impact that a youth organization can have on promoting and instilling positive values in young people. Young people who had been involved with the YO for only a week or two prior to being interviewed for this study, and those who had had years-long experience with this organization created rather different accounts, expressing and focusing on different concerns. Some of the major concerns, that is, the most salient psychosocial dynamics in the stories of YO novices are: need for *autonomy* and *independence*; *overcoming* difficulties, the feeling of *being different* and *unadapted*; need for *support*, and so on.

On the other hand, the most important dynamics in the experts' narratives are not only different, but some of them are of no relevance for the novices (are not at all, or only few times mentioned in novices' stories), and they are: the importance of *belonging* somewhere and having the sense of community and *togetherness*; seeking/receiving *recognition*; *proactive attitude*, or taking an active stance in one's own life; and being in a position to help, or in an environment that promotes the value of *helping others*, and so on. These findings have support in previous research studies, such as Heath's work (Heath, 2004), where she explains why youth based organizations prove to be the 'most fertile ecologies of learning': "...they underscore the importance of ensuring that young people see themselves as remaining connected to their community."

The most important concerns in the experts' narratives coincide remarkably with the most important values promoted at the youth organization. What the YO philosophy is about, which also came up in the participants' narratives about the YO in particular— *sense of community, developing a proactive life attitude, helping other people* and *doing something constructive/productive*—are not only the values expressed as youth narrated about the YO. As it could be observed in the experts' stories, long engagement with this community organization led to internalizing their values and employing them to all other relevant aspects of a young person's life (e.g. school, learning, background, etc.). In other words, these positive values promoted by the YO could be observed as youth narrated about most important things in their lives, and not only as they talked about the YO. Their sense-making about the rest of the life (outside of the YO) was infused with their profound experience of being involved with that community. These findings offer a significant insight about how once the environment is created in which youth feel accepted, appreciated and cared for – among other things – it can make them open and prone to appropriating the positive values embraced by and shared in that particular development-promoting environment.

One salient issue that seems to be of equal importance both to novices and experts was ethnic/racial and/or socio-economic *background/origin*, whose mutual relevance makes sense given the shared underprivileged background of all young people recruited by the YO, and hardship and discrimination that they are likely to face. It would be worthwhile exploring in future research how pertaining my findings are to this particular population of urban minority youth, and if a similar pattern would be found among youth coming from the culturally dominant group and/or higher socioeconomic positions in society. Minority youth have much more work to do around negotiating different, and sometimes conflicting, values while navigating through diverse environments – from home, through local community, school, and other societal institutions.

It is rather commonsensical that different environments will make us feel different about ourselves. Being a psychologist has a rather different meaning for me when I teach my undergraduate students, or work directly with underprivileged youth, or when I go to parties and mingle among non-psychologists. What is worthy of inquiry is exploring how some life aspects can be more or less 'controversial,' that is, provoking more conflicting experiences; and also, how can these life aspects be more or less controversial for different people. *School/Learning* was one of the most important things in the lives of my participants, and I would assume that the *worst* and *best* experiences of this life aspect would be far less polarized among youth coming from more privileged backgrounds where there is different meaning attached to education. Further, ethnic background is surely a more 'controversial' issue in lives of the ethnic minority youth than it is for the European-American youth. The point I am trying to make is that even though the sense we make about different aspects of who we are differs across various psychosocial environments, for some of us these environments can be more oppressive and yield stronger negative experiences of the important aspects of our lives. We could contemplate on the Blair's account about the importance of school/learning in her life, and about being ridiculed and not accepted by the peer group because she speaks Standard English and loves school; and ask ourselves if and how our experience and interpretation of this story would differ were she an European American girl from a middle-class background.

This paper illustrates a context-sensitive approach to thinking about and studying development in adolescence. Instead of focusing on stable characteristics of different aspects of identity, I explored the context-dependent experiences of the most self-defining aspects of youth's lives. Development in adolescence is about dealing with psycho-social diversity of environments that young people experience on daily basis. Regarding development in adolescence from a contextual stand point can have much more constructive implications in comparison to the approaches searching for the answers solely 'inside' the individual.

Among the youth in this study there were gang members, misfits, low achievers, children from broken homes; anorexia and suicide attempt survivors, and all of them were youth of color coming from backgrounds that offer little opportunity. They come to the YO and they are taught about performing arts and the production thereof; yet, they end up learning many other skills, changing their self-image and their life aspirations. The programs at the YO are not directed at 'correcting' any particular characteristic – 'fixing the deficits' – of these young people, as most of the youth programs still do (e.g. teen pregnancy prevention, juvenile delinquency, school drop-outs, substance abuse programs, etc.). The YO is not bounded by the idea of who these adolescents are; rather, it is propelled by the idea of what they *could become*.

With the aim of approaching a better understanding of who these young people are, and eventually helping them reach higher levels of psychological functioning, we should not focus solely on their personal characteristics, skills, competences, and histories; group memberships and so on. Instead, who they are and what they could become should always be regarded in the contexts, in the environments where various social practices in which they participate take place. Besides, taking into account the context allows better insight into the breadth of socio-cognitive processes that are at play as young people position themselves in regards to different contexts and different others with whom they interact. We got to see in this research study how what people *say* and *feel* about themselves changes as the context changes, and how we – the adults, practitioners, scholars – can help (re)shape these contexts so they are better fit to promote positive development, especially among the underprivileged youth.

What I propose with this chapter is one way of studying the interdependence of individuals and their environments, where we look for/at the 'within-person diversity.' I hope I succeeded in providing some helpful guidance to all those working both in formal and non-formal educational settings, who are enthusiastic about improving the environments in which young people learn and develop. Several lessons could be learned from this research, and many more from the practice of the YO in regards to how to create environments that would allow young people to *be their best selves,* as Gloria, one of the participants, said.

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CHAPTER 8

DEVELOPING AGENTIVE SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL: A RUSSIAN CASE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE FROM BELOW

Yuri Lapshin
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The new world trends and Russian Educational Reform

Understanding the processes of collective agentive work practices and working out the approaches to develop the professional and citizen's agency are topical nowadays in Europe, where the new ideas of "Enabling State Policy", Workfare State, New Liberal State etc. are being discussed actively (Dingeldey, I. 2005, Miettinen, 2013). All these conceptions assume shared responsibility between state and active citizens as true subjects of economic and social development (Marshall, 2005), and educational institutions must play a crucial role in helping people to become active and socially agentive.

The Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and its interventionist methodology provides fruitful framework to research the nature and laws of collective agency formation in real complex object-oriented activities, including education (Virkkunen, 2006; Yamazumi, 2007; Daniels, 2007). Interventional research projects made in collaboration with the practitioners who are interested in transforming their activity in response of the modern time requirements, gives also wide possibilities to deepen and develop CHAT and DWR methodology itself.

Russian Education is going through reform aimed to improve quality of education and include it in modern international trends. It introduced at least three significant changes: new Federal Educational Standard (implementing step-by-step since 2011, including new leveled structure of educational results: personality, meta-competence, subject competence), new evaluation approach Unified National Test, introduced in 2009 and became the only indicator for school efficiency (Minina, 2010), and state funding principle "money goes to child" (each school is funded per capita of its pupil), forcing schools to compete for more pupils. These innovations, introduced primarily as "experiments", now are established by new Federal Law on Education (2012) as the

final design of Educational Reform and strict rules for all educational schools. The Law also claims the responsibility of parents for education of their children and gives them extended rights to choose a school and taking part in school governance.

The declared aim of new state educational policy is to improve quality of National Education, make it modern and include it in modern world trends (such as "Bologna Process"). Neoliberal by ideology, the reform is paternalist by way of implementation. Had started as a set of "free experiments", it turns now into State Policy, accompanied by several sub-legislative regulations and administrative instructions, different kinds of tests and inspections.

In this process schools face several problems and contradictions underlying behind them, sometimes going through crises. It is not surprising that school teachers and administrators, as well as pupils and their parents, regard the reform as pressure and danger. The real danger is that the traditional Russian "top-down" *governmentality* (Lemke, 2002) causes suspicion and distrust of all educational agents (teachers, school administrators, parents and children), provokes their resistance and imitation in response to the new requirements. One of the external social challenges to practice is how to involve school collectives, teachers and administration in common, into reforming process as genuine agents of the reform.

In wide sense our research tries to find a way how to involve school collectives (teachers and administration in common) into reforming process as genuine agents of innovative transformation of their activity.

The research questions are:

How the formation and destruction of shared object of activity influences on agency of the school team as a collective subject of activity? What kind of relation exists between renewal of the concept of collective activity and the collective agency transformation?

Description of the research area: "The School of Self Determination" (traditions, crisis, need for the collaboration)

The research is making in collaboration with the pedagogical team of Moscow' school nº 734, known also as "The School of Self-Determination". Founded in 1970 as regular public school in the newly built area at far edge of Moscow city with diverse population, the school became well-known by its unusual atmosphere of enthusiastic community between teachers and children. The first headmaster of the school Iskra Tandit gathered talented teachers in efficient collective activity aimed to high quality education, cultural development and altruist social labor for community.

Later, since the second half of 80th till 2007, the school was ruled by Alexander Tubelsky, one of famous member of "author's innovating pedagogy" movement. In 90th the school developed different kinds of innovations, based on supporting pupil's right of choice and meta-subject learning, created inner democracy institutions and established the Association of Democracy Schools of Russia. The school's educational conception aimed on "developing of free self-determining persons". The school was one of "think tanks" of liberal pedagogy, evidently influenced on leveled conception of Federal Educational Standard.

After death of Alexander Tubelsky in 2007 the school found itself in trouble situation. Teachers suffer the loss of efficiency their pedagogical methods, administration feels increasing pressure of external requirements, Unified State Examination results are falling down, a number of parents who want to send their children to the school is decreasing, the reputation of the school in local community is getting worse. Practically all the requirements of the Reform are considered by teachers as absolute "evil", aimed to "destroy education". In 2012 current headmaster of the school identified the situation as "deep crisis", realized that the school needs an external assist to overcome it and invited our research team for the collaboration.

Theoretical framework and the collective agency concept

Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework of the research is Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) based on classical ideas of L. Vygotsky and A. Leontiev. Vygotsky put forward the revolution idea on development of higher mental functions ("neo-formations"), mediated by cultural artifacts in social interaction:

> Any function ... in the development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an inter-psychological category, and then within the child as an intra-psychological category... Internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 163).

Based on the Vygotsky's ideas, Leontiev worked out the theory of object-oriented activity as a mediated subject–object interaction", which is "non additive, molar unit of life with its own structure, its own internal transformations, and its own development"

(Leontiev, 1978), a structured system of relations between human as subject, material object as human's motive, goals, acts, conditions and operations.

This theory, extended by Engeström (1987) on collective activity as unit of analysis, described in the triangle model of interactions between working collective of people as subject, common object, shared by them and the community, mediated by three types of mediators: tools, rules and division of labor (see also Kaptelinin, 2005). Engeström also suggested the meaning of each mediated interaction (see Fig.1)
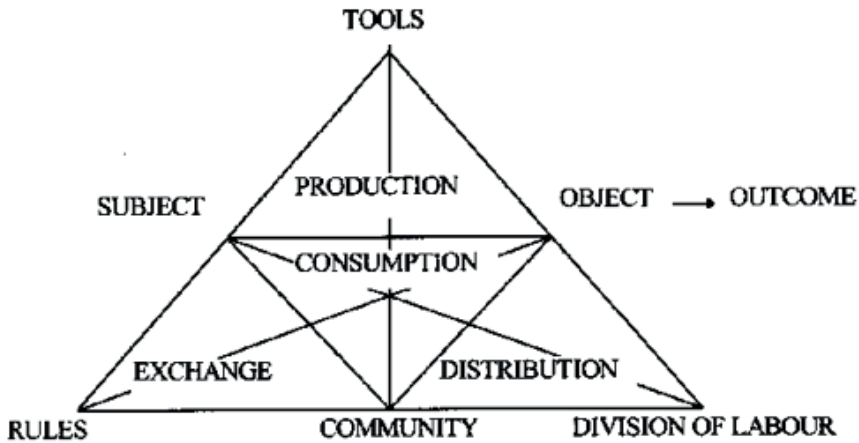

Figure 1: The triangle model of the collective activity (Engeström, 1987).

This new generation of activity theory "focusing on the learning and development that emerge in the institutional contexts of practical activities culturally and historically mediated within a society" (Yamazumi, 2007). The approach and triangle model of collective activity by Y. Engeström provides the capacity to research the collective subject, investigate its agency development in relation with the development of the shared object within the whole activity system.

"AGENCY" CONCEPT IN CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY.

The problem of conceptualization of collective agency, its operationalization and investigation in empirical research is far from being solved today. As Hitlin and Elder stress, "the term "agency" is quite slippery and it is used differently depending on the epistemological roots and goals of scholars who employ it" (Hitlin & Elder, 2007). Nevertheless, as A. Edwards insists, based on her studying educational and social

care collective work practices, "strong forms of agency are necessary for professional practice in complex settings and can be learnt" (Edwards, 2007).

Considering as "the capacity of a person or any other entity to act in a world" (Bandura, 2001), "act independently and to make their own free choices" (Barker & Chris, 2005), "the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments... which... both reproduces and transforms those structures into interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) agency concept can be applied to the collective activity phenomena.

For the activity theory the agency first of all related to transformation of the activity, "when the object/outcome of the activity has been reconceptualized and all the other elements of the system have changed correspondingly" (Virkkunen, 2006).

Y.Engeström defines the agency as the capacity of an actor for "breaking away from a given frame of action and the taking of initiatives to transform it" (Engeström, 2006). Referred to Engeström's definition, Virkkunen proposed: "when a group of people does this and searches collaboratively for a new form for the productive activity in which they are engaged we could speak of shared transformative agency (Virkkunen, 2006).

Edwards points out that joint activity changes the object, as well as the relationships between people involved in it. She introduced the concept of *relational agency*, which is "a capacity to work with others to expand the object that one is working on by bringing to bear the sense-making of others and to draw on the resources they offer, when responding to that sense-making" (Edwards, 2007).

Yamazumi underlines also, that "the agency as the subject potentialities and positions of the externalized creation of new tools and forms of activity with which humans transform both their outer and inner worlds and thus master their own lives and futures" (Yamazumi, 2007). Studying of processes of transformation of the activity, we can understand the nature of forming and development the agentive subjects.

Methodology and methods

Developmental Work Research Methodology

Yamazumi summarizes "the three principal positions of activity theory in human developmental research: the interrelationships of development, contradiction, and agency" (Yamazumi, 2006).

Vygotsky underlined, that the analysis of new formations of higher psychological functions and social behavior (such as collective agency is) consists of "taking each higher form of behavior not as a thing, but as a process and putting it in motion so as to proceed not from a thing and its parts, but from a process to its separate instances" (Vygotsky 1997, p. 68).

N.Veresov (2010) identified the five principles of vygotskian experimental-genetic research methodology as follows:

1. *The principle of «buds of development».* At the beginning the experimental study should detect the functions which are in their «bud» (embryonic) stages, not yet developed.

2. *The principle of dramatic event.* "The dramatic event is the form in which the higher function appears first as a social relation before it becomes an internal higher mental function."

3. *The principle of interaction of real (natural) and ideal (cultural) forms.* In the course of experimental study both forms should be detected. Tools and means of interaction between these forms should be specially created and involved in the experimental procedure.

4. *The principle of developmental tools.* During the experiment, cultural tools should have to be discovered (found) by the child in cooperation with an adult or more competent peer.

5. *The principle of sustainable qualitative changes as an outcome of the experiment.* These new qualitative levels of organization should be experimentally detected and described. (Veresov, 2010)

Y. Engeström with CRADLE colleagues worked out the Developmental Work Research Methodology as implementation of vygotskian principles experimental-genetic research in organizational learning (Engeström, 1996a). It includes preliminary historical research of the development of the activity system, ethnographical research of current activity processes and formative interventional method 'Change Laboratory' (Engeström, 1996b). The process of intervention based on the expansive learning cycle (see Fig. 2) and provides opportunities for development of collective work activity through findings and overcoming dialectical contradictions in social interaction within group of practitioners and collaboration with interventionist researchers. To analyze the process of social interaction in Change Laboratory Engeström and Sannino worked out the method of discursive manifestations of contradictions analysis (Engeström and Sannino, 2011).
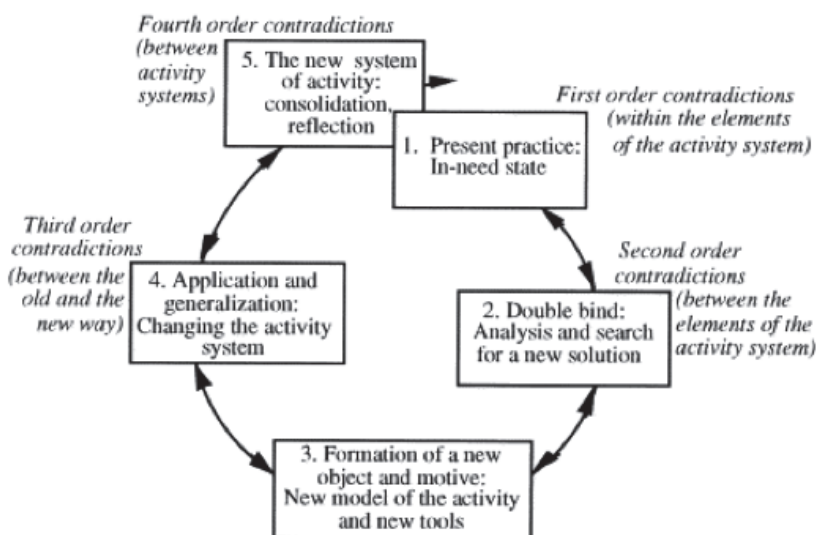
Figure 2: The phases of the cycle of expansive transition and learning (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000).

As J. Virkkunen pointed out, Developmental Work Research is an interventionist methodology that aims at prompting and supporting practitioners' agency in analyzing and transforming the system of their joint activity. Agency here means breaking away from the given frame of action and taking the initiative to transform it (Virkkunen, 2006).

In our research we use the DWR Methodology to study the relation between collective agency of the school team (which could be conceptualized in different forms described above) and the formation of the concept of collective activity in development of both sides. We worked out the historical research of development the school activity, ethnographical research of current processes in it, organized and conducted The Change Laboratory formative intervention.

Historical and Ethnographical Research Analysis of the Activity System of the School

To analyze the activity system of the school in its historical development from the foundation in 1970 till now, it was made 20 narrative interviews with teachers, administrators and creative leaders who work or used to work at the school. 10 former graduates of the school were interviewed also. 10 interviews with parents of the school pupils (5 of them are former pupils of this school). 7 focused group interviews with pupils of the school (18 children of 7 – 11 grades were asked). Additionally, the collection of

conceptual documents (papers, books, brochures and videos) of the school's different periods have been read, watched and analyzed.

These materials allowed us to construct the chronological timeline of the school activity, to distinguish the main periods and cycles of school development, to model the activity system of each period. The inner history of the school has been compared with the political history of the country at the same time and educational policy of the state.

Typical processes of collective work (such as the school team and different workgroup meetings, episodes of school life, educational activities, school board meetings, project conference) were observed and videotaped. The materials of the preliminary research were used in preparing and conducting the formative intervention Change Laboratory.

Interventional Change Laboratory Method

The Change Laboratory formative intervention, worked out by Y. Engeström with CRADLE colleagues (Engeström, 1996b), implementing the principles of experimental-genetic method of Vygotsky (Vygotsky 1997; Veresov, 2010) and Expansive Learning Cycle stages (Engeström, 1987, Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000).

Engeström describes the typical layout of the Change Laboratory (see Fig. 3) as a set of vygotskian developmental tools:

> In the Change Laboratory, the original 'task' of Vygotskian designs is represented by the mirror which contains challenging examples of problems and disturbances. The original 'mediating artifact' is represented by a model of the entire activity system that is used to make sense of the built-in contradictions generating the troubles and disturbances depicted in the mirror. This model is also used as a vehicle of time travel, to construct a vision of the past and the future of the activity system. The potential capabilities and emerging formations are represented by the surface in the middle. It is a third space, reserved for new ideas and tools for reorganizing the activity. (Engeström, 1996b).
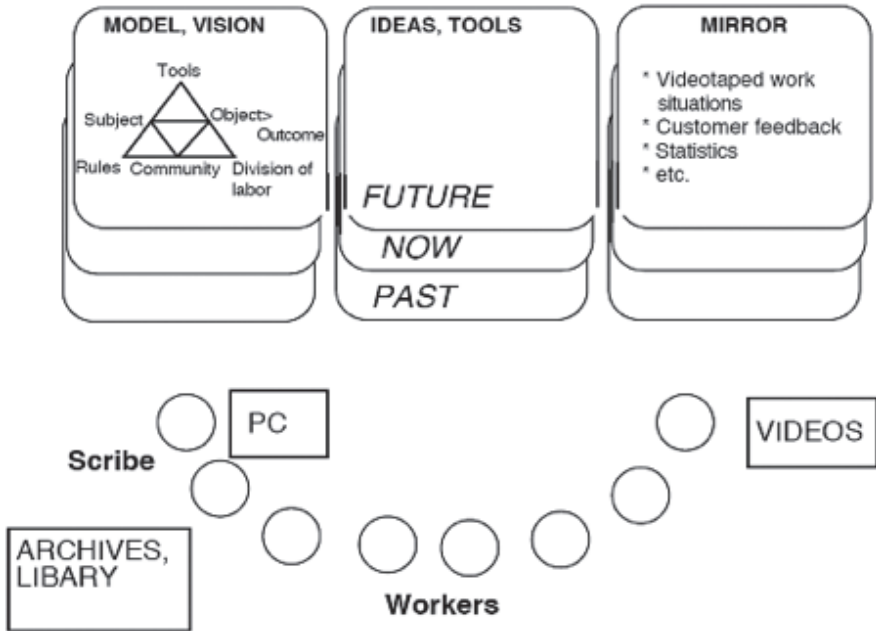
Figure 3: The prototypical layout of the Change Laboratory (Engeström, 1996b).

The aim of the Change Laboratory in the school was to reconceptualize the collective work activity of the school by the participants represent the school team with provided by the researchers a set of developmental tools. The researchers conducted the sessions, prepared the developmental tool for the practitioners, collected data to analyze the development of new concept of the school activity and the development of the team agency.

The representative group of teachers and administrative persons contained of 24 participants of 65 members of the school collective including the headmaster of the school took part in the Change Laboratory group. The participants represent all structural divisions of the school and informal groups inside the collective and were selected by the sociometric query. The average number of the participants of each session was 16.

The team of the researchers consists of three people (the authors of the paper), two of them were the conductors of the sessions and the third one had the task of observing and videotaping the process.

The sessions longed from October 2012 till the end of March 2013. 10 sessions were made, in average twice a month. The duration of each session was three hours, with fifteen-minute break in the the middle.

All sessions were fully videotaped and observed by a member of research teams, all materials made by participants are saved. The material and ideal production of the sessions, the content of speeches of the participants, verbal and nonverbal signs of development of interpersonal relations will be carefully analyzed later.

The findings of the research

The historical development cycles

Through the preliminary historical research several basic ideas were traced through the four decades history of the school: openness of the school for all kind of children without any selection, mission of cultural enlightenment and personality growth of children, tolerance to each other, agentive partnership between adults and children.

Two long-term cycles (1st cycle in 1970 – 1985, 2nd cycle in 1988 – 2012) of the school activity with the typical stages (Rise – Flourish – Decline – Crisis) were outlined (see Fig. 4).

At the beginning of both cycles, a strong leader with clear own ideas formed the collective around several talented teachers ("stars"), with whom the common object of activity was effectively shared because of commonality personal values. The leader had a clear requirement to teachers about their constant development (the difference between two cycles was such: the first leader required to develop toward the quality of lessons, the second one – to new inventions in teaching methods). Both leaders as headmasters saw their own mission to be "stone wall" for teachers, covering them from the external authority's pressure (inspections etc.). Both times the school collective formed the fruitful alliance with the pupils in common building of interesting life in the school in contrast to poor possibilities of external life.

The temporal political climate influenced on the collective activity, including the state policy in education (see Fig. 4). In early 70th after the 60th epoch of "Warmness", the ideas of revolutionary romantics and cultural enlightenment were still widespread and popular; although the state pressure was slow growing. The other Rise and Flourish period of the school continued from the second half of 80th till the end of 90th (from the time of dramatic liberation, which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and next decade of "wild freedom" of capitalism, when the new Russian State was simply too weak for paternalist regulation).

At the end of the 70s situation in Soviet society finally turned into stagnation. Old teachers characterized that time as "a time of absence of principles and indifference", pointed on the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan as key moment after which "we felt that it was impossible to discuss something important". The pressure of authority control in education was growing, teachers "felt themselves tired", the conflicts and

misunderstandings in the collective and between the headmaster and the collective have occurred. Similarly, interviewed teachers pointed out, that after 2003 the state requirements to educational system started to growth, the authority of the headmaster were decreasing, the collective asked to stabilize the pedagogical system of the school and "the common idea of the school have become blurred". Both times it slowly led the collective activity to Decline.
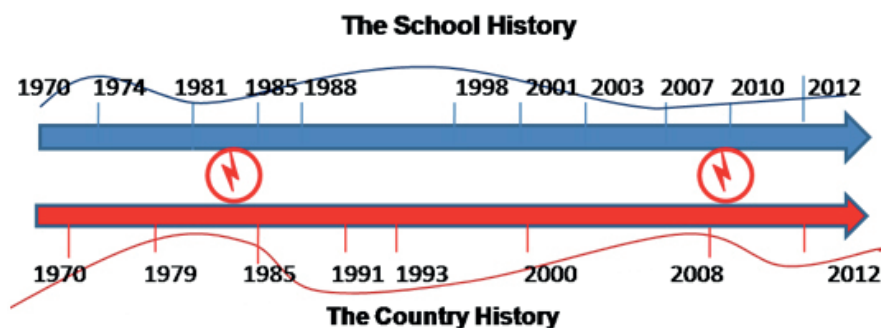
The School History

1970 1974 1981 1985 1988   1998 2001 2003 2007 2010 2012

1970   1979   1985   1991 1993   2000   2008   2012

The Country History

Figure 4: The correspondence between the school activity cycles and the state policy pressure phases.

Two school crises of first half of 80th and 2000th also had similarities: After the first headmaster leaving the school under the external pressure in 1981 and death of Alexander Tubelsky in 2007 the collective advanced to the headmaster's position one of its members, but none of "stars", with the aim to "preserve" the school from the danger of external candidate. Both times this strategy led to stagnation, accumulating controversies among the colleagues about the methods of work, dividing the collective apart and in fact, collapsing the shared object.

We can say with confidence, that both crises were the crises of losing shared object of activity and disintegration of the collective agency. In both cases such processes corresponded with growing formal administrative requirements and restrictions, frequent inspections and feeling the growing threat from educational authorities.

The contradictions identified in the Change Laboratory

During the Change Laboratory process the participants identified the contradictions of current school activity in each element of the system and between some of them (see Fig. 5). **The contradiction in "Product"** (i.e. the main properties of the school graduates) between *Independent high culture person* and *Successful passing examinations"* is

considered as a classical Marxist contradiction between "Use Value" and "Exchange Value", which Engeström and Sannino calls "the pervasive primary contradiction… inherent to every commodity" and, at the same time, "driving force of transformation of activity" (Engeström, Sannino, 2010). Indeed, the school teachers consider as the main result of their educational work "independent cultured person", but the society requires from the graduates to be able to pass examinations successfully, because that is the only instrument of evaluating of education and, at the same time, the way to enter universities, colleges etc. The school teachers despise the Unified State Examination as the instrument of evaluating of their labor and aim of education for a pupil. However, when they have been asked: "Don't you think that "independent high cultured persons" must be able to prepare for any examination, if it necessary for their future? Isn't it only a technical task for such persons?" – They answer usually: "It depends on abilities of the pupil, family preconditions, pupil's motivation, but not on our work".
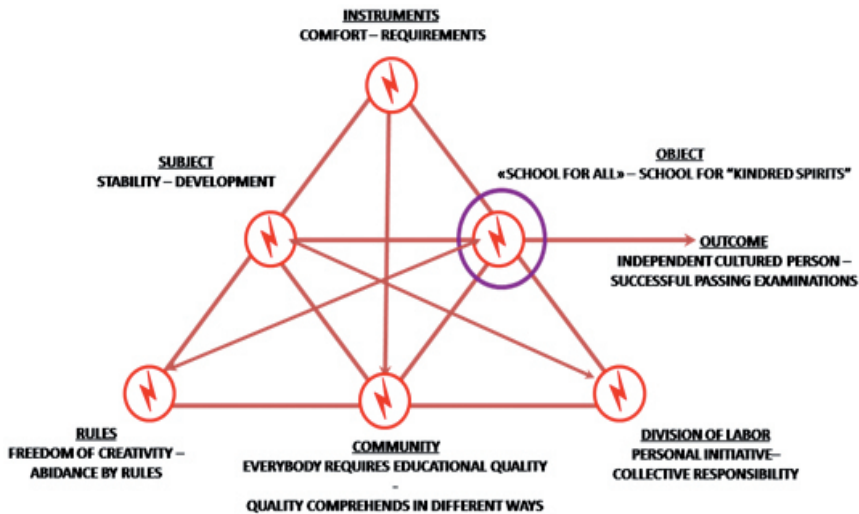

Figure 5: Identified contradictions of current activity system.

It leads to **the contradiction in Object** between "*Openness of the school for all kind of children*" and "*School for kindred spirits, who have common values with the school*". This contradiction is traced from the very beginning of the school. On one hand, the school traditions based on the classical Russian pedagogy of "Enlightment for poor people" (related to the names of L. Tolstoy, N. Chernyshevsky, A. Makarenko, V. Sukhomlinsky); on the other hand, the school's favorite image of itself is the Emperor's Lyceum, the elite school for noble children with very free and creative atmosphere (which graduates the "color of

the Nation" people, such as A. Pushkin, noble revolutionists Decembrists and outstanding statesmen). Currently, when the State requires the educational results measured by Unified State Exam, this contradiction, hidden earlier, is sharpened. The contradiction in the Object strictly related to the contradictions in Community and Subject - other two main interacting element of the activity interaction (see Kaptelinin, 2005).

The contradiction in Community was formulated as *"everybody demands to improve the quality of education, but there is no common understanding of it"*. It concerns parents as well as professionals, also the controversial demands of authorities, providing the Reform. On one hand, there is new Federal Educational Standard, aimed on integral personality growth; on other hand, the only indicator of educational results is Unified State Exam, characterized by one of teachers as "the only real Standard".

The contradiction in Subject. The central contradiction in the subject is between *"Stability* (of traditional ways of work, relationships, structures, personal positions and authorities) and *"Development* "toward no one knows where", as one of the participants said. After the years of attempts to "preserve" the traditions of the school without real developing reflections, with the blurred object of common activity, the school team has divided by different groups and isolated individuals with different sights on the conception of the school, educational methods, organizational institutions and rules. The relationships between colleagues are based on personal sympathies and antipathies instead of real sharing a common object of activity. This is the main reason for the rest contradictions in the mediators of activity (rules, tools and division of labor), and between the elements of the activity system.

The loss of collective agency. By bitter words of another participant, "we lost our key points, which we would understand clearly and commonly, from which we could start to move forward". We can conclude that the collective of the school have lost its shared object of activity and have lost the collective agency (Engeström, 2006; Virkkunen 2006). Also we can say about the decreasing of the relational agency of the teachers (Edwards, 2007). However, the participants kept their personal agency to the school values manifested it in their resistance to accept of the requirements from above and direct adopting the school practice with them. As Yamazumi pointed out, it is important mark of practitioners' agency (Yamazumi, 2007), and it gave us, the researchers, a hope on possibility of progress.

Formation of the new concept of the school activity

Moved toward the future and defined the concrete time limitations for necessary transformation in 3 years, the participants have concretized common Zone of Proximal Development. Worked out in small groups several desirable images of the future school and analyzed them along with the researchers, the group found the main vectors of

further development of the school (see Fig. 6). Interesting is that those vectors are directly related to the contradiction in the object of activity: *"Openness of the school"* and *"Commonality of values"*.
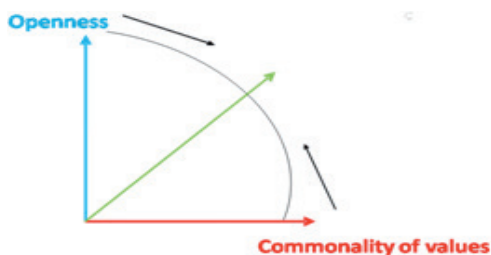

Figure 6: The abstract germ-cell (vector of the development) model of the future school.

Examined this abstract model with current situation around the school, the group concluded, that the school needs from the one hand, to increase the number of pupils, to rise educational results by USE, to reconcile the school conception with FES; from the other hand, the school also needs to share values and goals of education with parents and students. Without the last, the openness of the school will lead to final loosing of the school identity. Without the first, the school just cannot survive in modern funding principles. The resulting vector, which is lying between these two, led the group to a "germ cell" for the modeling of new school conception (Engeström, 1996b) which was called by some participant as "Octopus" (see Fig. 7). The emerged new model assumes that students have different needs in this particular school and its educational services. The main feature of the model is "diversity of ways to enter and exit of the school for the pupils by their own needs" and "open partnership with other institutions and communities". The school with its traditions of free atmosphere of self-choosing and self-determination and appropriate tools and regulations has to be opened for all children and their parents, who have an actual need find their own goals in education and, in wider sense, in life that the school can meet. There has to be different ways to enter school and to leave it (for all grades): That would call for new kinds of collaboration with other educational institutes and communities in providing opportunities for orientation and exercise of choice for the children.
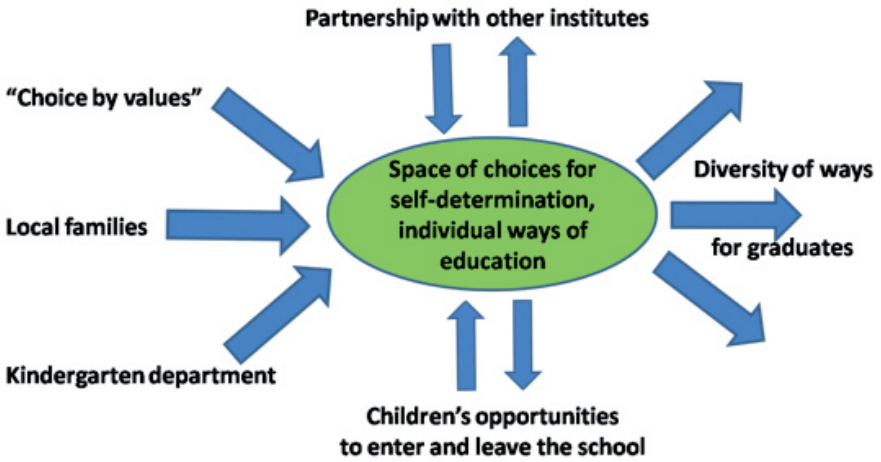
Figure 7: The germ-cell model of the renewal school of Self-Determination.

Analyzing this model, participants further specified the task of school development: "To seek ways to enter into a dialog with local community and converging of the values of the school with those of the students and their parents". It led them to concrete first steps, needed to solve at first in transformation of the school activity: "to know actual needs of modern children and parents", "to work out clear image for external people", "to build general system of work with parents", "to set age succession system of educational results", to construct a new management structure involving teachers, students and parents. These tasks allowed to divide the Change Laboratory group into several task groups to prepare the strategy of sharing the results of the Change Laboratory with the colleagues and, later on, to form teams to carry out the further transformation of the school activity (see Fig. 8)

Figure 8: The tasks for the further transformation the school's activity system.

The participants worked out a number of ideas on further solving of these tasks. Based on those ideas with analytical assistance of the researchers, the group developed the abstract model of future system of activity, made in terms of requirements to necessary concrete content. They agreed on the formulation of the object of the future activity as: "Each pupil potentially able and individually gifted to: be a subject of his or her own educational trajectory; learn his or her own strengths and weaknesses; choose his or her own way of development". All the other elements of the activity system were re-defined in the model on the basis of this formulation (Figure 9). The created model specifies the requirements for the transformation of the school that would be carried out after the Change Laboratory by the whole school collective. The evident achievement of this model is its orientation on the clear object and coherence of all elements. Through implementing of the new model in practice the school will be able to overcome the contradictions of current activity
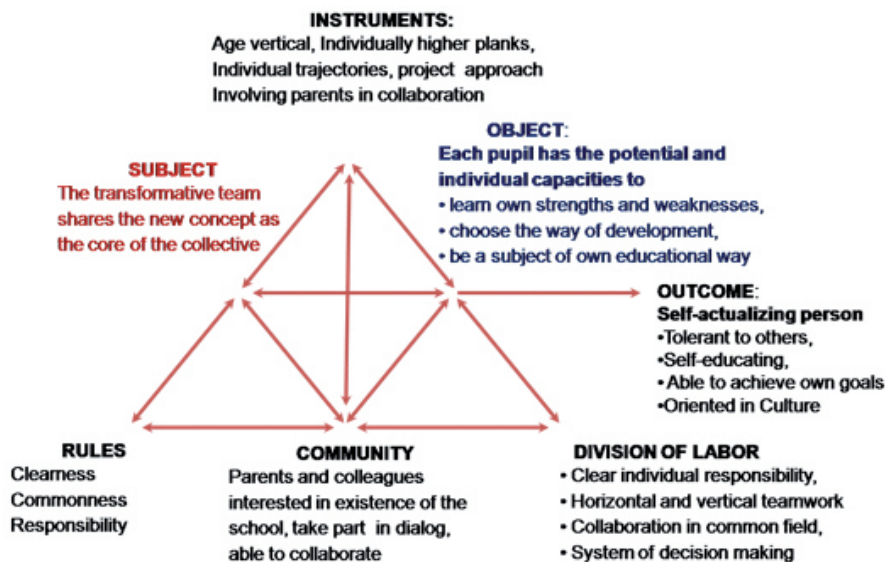
INSTRUMENTS:
Age vertical, Individually higher planks,
Individual trajectories, project approach
Involving parents in collaboration

SUBJECT
The transformative team
shares the new concept as
the core of the collective

OBJECT:
Each pupil has the potential and
individual capacities to
• learn own strengths and weaknesses,
• choose the way of development,
• be a subject of own educational way

OUTCOME:
Self-actualizing person
•Tolerant to others,
•Self-educating,
• Able to achieve own goals
•Oriented in Culture

RULES
Clearness
Commonness
Responsibility

COMMUNITY
Parents and colleagues
interested in existence of the
school, take part in dialog,
able to collaborate

DIVISION OF LABOR
• Clear individual responsibility,
• Horizontal and vertical teamwork
• Collaboration in common field,
• System of decision making

Figure 9: The abstract model of the future activity of the school.

During the final reflection the Change Laboratory group admitted the necessity to involve in this work other members of the collective. Several participants claimed that they don't want to take part in further work, preferring "to leave this for young". A number of the participants declared their intent to work actively on it further. Some shared their doubts in the reality of such transformation. This work allowed to begin with reorganizing the school collective around the transformative team, based on the Change Laboratory group. One of the most important signs of this was that the four of informal leaders of the school collective started to work together with each other and the headmaster of the school in organizing the school conference and sharing the results of the Change Laboratory among their colleagues.

After one month of the end of Change Laboratory sessions, the findings of the Change Laboratory were spread out and discussed in the conference of the school team. It allowed widen the transformation team with recruiting of colleagues outside of the Change Laboratory group. Later on several directions of the reformation of school activity in line with the Change Laboratory decisions have been launched, including some new concrete projects in educational process and management. The research is continued by observation of the processes of renovation of the educational activity and school life. First conclusions about transformation of the school activity and team's agency could be made at the end of the 2013-2014 educational year.

THE PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The agency of the subject of collective activity related with the capacity of the group to develop the shared object. As far as the shared object remains at the center of common attention and the activity is developing, the collective agency remains strong enough.

When the collective switches to the strategy of "preserving", the object is starting blur and the collective agency is starting to collapse. The "preserving" strategy leads to the accumulations of contradictions in the collective activity, which does not correspond anymore to changing demands of modernity. The relationships with the communities weaken; the school team feels itself situated in a hostile environment.

The rising of the collective agency is related to the renewal of the shared object of activity. It was clear that the school collective needs the external assistance to begin with the transformation. Once in the school history it happened when the new leader with modern ideas joined the collective from outside and involved new people, new transformational team was organized and the new object of the school activity was shared by the team.

At the result of the Change Laboratory, the team of the school seemed to be focused on transformation of the educational process and management, started a raw of new projects, and involved new people (teachers and parents). During all next educational year the observation of changes carry out. Later on, we are to analyze the data gathered in the Change Laboratory to see will the school team reorganize the practice in appliance with the new model of activity, to find out the relation between the concept formation (the renewal of the shared object) and the development of agency of the team.

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<u>**CHAPTER 9**</u>

VYGOTSKI'S STUDIES ON BLINDNESS

Bento Selau

Introduction

Vygotski involvement with studies related to blindness (and other impairments) was not transversal. His immersion in this area started when he was a teacher at the Teacher Training Institute, between 1921 and the beginning of 1924, and lasted until almost the end of his scientific career (BLANCK, 2003; LUBOVSKY, 2012). The psychology of disabled children was considered essential by Vygotski to elaborate a general theory on human development (KOZULIN, 1994). It means that this author developed an appropriate theoretical corpus to compose the current blindness studies, in pedagogical and psychological fields, and that the achievement of an analysis of this work is justified as an input to the current research around this theme.

Although this substantial work around human disabilities, it is possible to ask: what from the defectology by Vygotski might be applicable exclusively to blind people? In an attempt to answer this question, it is proposed to present the different theoretical and practical placements by Vygotski about the psychology and pedagogy of the blind, exposed in his studies on defectology[1]. Fundamentally, this work involves the presentation of a study with theoretical and conceptual approach and pedagogical-psychological character, whose foundation is in Volume V of The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotski (1997a). The text starts from the proposition made by Van der Veer and Valsiner (2006) that the defectology work by Vygotski is organized into three phases; however, the work presented here, specifies the context of studies by this author about blindness.

This task was based on several interpretive readings of all chapters of volume V (VYGOTSKI, 1997a), aiming to identify the position of the author regarding the education

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[1]   The research that has been enrolled in the Office of the Dean for Research at the Federal University of Pampa, in 2010, with completion in 2013, under the title "Vygotski and the studies on visual impairment", coordinated by the author of this text.

and psychology of blind subjects. It is included in the study and research field of different researchers interested in blindness on Vygotski, as Barros et al. (2005), Bianchetti et al. (2000), Nuernberg (2008), Caiado (2003), Lira e Schlindwein (2008), Silva and Batista (2007), Carneiro (1999), Garcia (1999), Borges and Kittel (2002), Rosa and Ochaíta (1993), Rivière (1993, 2002), Raposo (2006), Kozulin (1994), Kozulin and Gindis (2007), Beyer (2000), and Van der Veer and Valsiner (2006). These researchers did not care to do the study as presented here, which does not mean that the works previously done do not show important aspects to the understanding of Vygotski's psychology and pedagogy related to the study of blindness.

To take forward the proposed goal, we must reflect on the theoretical influences to which Vygotski was under in the course of his scientific career. Using the term "theoretical influences" in plural, it is stated that there were multiple and different sources, showing that the theoretical construction of the author has been establishing as a dynamic process, having changed throughout his career. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Vygotski's positions on issues related to blindness are not limited to the contents of the text entitled "The Blind Child" (VYGOTSKI, 1997b), the only text of the author that carries in its title the specificity of the study on this type of disability. This text groups only some of his views regarding the topic. His position regarding blind people is distributed all over the articles grouped in Volume V of The Collected Works (VYGOTSKI, 1997a – the volume that presents his psychological-pedagogical propositions about blindness though it also discuss other disabilities linked directly with theoretical proposals, concerning defectology, that he defended). Thus, considering "The Blind Child" (VYGOTSKI, 1997b), as the only source to try to understand Vygotski's thinking about blindness, is a mistake because it limits the notion of the author's understanding on this disability.

Specifically in this paper development, while it evidences changes in Vygotski's conceptions about blindness, it is shown distance from reflexology and ideas arising from Adlerian psychoanalysis and also reinforcement of concepts related to blindness in its cultural-historical psychology. First, however, details of the proposed methodology and some information about the defectology by Vygotski will be presented.

Methodological Course

To develop this work, it was necessary to use an approach that is consistent with the established objective, a methodology that could help identify Vygotski's arguments about blindness, based on his theoretical production. So we adopted the suggestions of Salvador (1986) and Lima and Mioto (2007), referring to the literature, however, with some adjustments, necessary for the development of this study.

This strategy and its adaptations were drawn so that they complied with three stages: identification and collection of information; analysis of the material and production of a metatext. A description of each stage will be presented hereafter.

The first phase to be completed was the identification of Vygotski texts that dealt directly with blindness. Following the definition of the relevant theoretical material – Volume V (VYGOTSKI, 1997a) – the information gathering was done. In continuation of this first stage, the information gathering involved an initial reading of the entire Volume V, without the worry of doing any type of identification. Afterwards, a selective reading was performed, trying to connect each text with the corresponding phase according to the defining characteristics of each one identified by Van der Veer and Valsiner (2006). Having created a prior listing of texts related to each phase, there was a conference of each text with dates (production or publication) arranged in Volume V, trying to confirm if, indeed, each chapter corresponds to the phase indicated by Van der Veer and Valsiner (2006), from the date.

The material analysis corresponded to the second phase of the work. To fulfill this step, we analyzed each text content, aiming to identify the Vygotski's thought on education and psychology of blindness. To this end, new readings of the texts were necessary in order to answer the proposed objective. This process involved: a deconstruction of texts, in order to identify separately each idea expressed by the author on the psychology and pedagogy of the blind; a regrouping of the propositions expounded by Vygotski, to gather their similar ideas (trying not to have a repetitive text); and finally, a reflexive reading, performing a crossover of the ideas exposed by Vygotski with the research goal.

The third phase was related to the production of a metatext intended to present the results of the analysis and interpretation of Vygotski's theoretical production on the topic in question. The aim of this metatext was the expression of the senses captured from the set of selected texts.

Importantly, the textual structure was presented without conducting a criticism regarding timeliness or pertinence of the content expressed by Vygotski, since the original proposal was focused on understanding the idea that the author sought to communicate.

The formation of the metatext consisted in grouping the material studied creating separate texts according to the corresponding phase. All this work resulted in a reorganization of the texts of Volume V (VYGOTSKI, 1997a), in order to facilitate the understanding given by Vygotski to education and psychology of the blind, exposed in three categories presented at the conclusion of the text.

The defectology by Vygotski

The term defectology was used in Russia in the 1920s to name the science that studied children with different types of "defects" (disabilities) whether they were

mental, physical or both[2] (VEER and VALSINER, 2006). Kozulin (1994) explains that as a field of study, defectology had as main motivation the medical-pedagogical study on the development of a large number of children who wandered the streets and towns of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) shortly after the October Revolution and the Russian Civil War. These children were abandoned, became orphans, lived several deprivations, for about four or five years, and because of some of these reasons, they had their development severely affected. The complexity of these children and young people conditions made the task of distinguishing the type of need that they had (poor nutrition, health problems, socio-psychological, educational etc.) really difficult. Therefore, the initial task of defectology, while working area and scientific research, was to identify those needs and the type of treatment (medical, educational or psychological) considered more appropriate to rehabilitate each child.

In 1929, Vygotski defined defectology as "the branch of knowledge about the qualitative variety of abnormal child development and the diversity of types of this development" (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, p. 37). Kozulin and Gindis (2007) indicate that "the term 'defeklologija', in Russian, simply means 'the study of defects'" (p. 333). According to these authors, the term defectology was appropriate to the mechanistic reality of the 1920s that compared human beings to machines (in this case, if the "mechanism" is not "working", the "defect" must be found, sorted and corrected).

Kozulin and Gindis (2007) clarify the mechanistic meaning which was associated to the researches in the defectology area. They highlight that, from the point of view of the quantitative investigations results from that time, a mentally retarded child, for example, was considered with less (certain) amount of intelligence. Vygotski (1997c) strongly argued against this reductionist approach which disabled people were subjected, criticizing the philosophical and scientific conception of disabilities that would exclusively turn to disability quantitative determinants that only demarcate the degree of intellect impairment: therefore, he argued that the pedagogue should consider the pupil "defect" just because he can achieve the same development as the one without disabilities "*in a different way, by a different route, by other means*" (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, p. 17). [emphasis added]. For Vygotski (1997c), it was fundamental to the pedagogue to identify the person disability and know the psychological aspects involved, because knowing the peculiarity of the path in which he should lead his pupil, the teacher could implement more productive pedagogical actions.

The foundation of some discussions developed by Vygotski (1997c) on the positioning of Russian defectology of that time was focused on what he considered a necessity of

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[2]   In the defectology area, Vygotski developed works related to the deaf, blind, schizophrenic, physically and mentally disabled.

paradigm shift: the author contrasted his research to the conception of defectology he considered purely quantitative, which supported the existence of special laws of development of "normal" and "abnormal" child. He stated that this method was limited to diagnosis, and based only on the tasks that children could achieve, and that such measures were not sufficient to assist the pedagogical and psychological subjects. His theoretical criticism was directed mainly to the work of Binet[3] and Rossolimo[4], considered as the authors of most diffused quantitative methods of "abnormal" child psychological research. Vygotski (1997c) planned to build a defectology based on, what he called, a system of scientific knowledge, a defectology that was authentically scientific, for the creation of a dialectical-materialist science on "abnormal" child (BEIN et al. 1997a). To do so, he realized that the methodological organization of defectology was not completed, being necessary also to support it philosophically.

Vygotski (1997c) proposed that the defectology should fight for the thesis that "the child whose development is complicated by the deficiency is not simply a child less developed than normal peers, but otherwise developed *in another way*" [emphasis added] (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, p. 12). In this explanation, Vygotski (1997c) indicated that the disabled child presents a type of peculiar qualitatively distinct development, and pointed out that the specificity of the organic and psychological structure, the type of development and personality are what distinguish the disabled child from a "normal" child, not the quantitative proportions coming from measurements. The major theoretical and practical goals of the defectology by Vygotski and his scientific foundations were focused on creating a dialectical materialist science of "abnormal"[5] child (BEIN et al., 1997a).

According to Blanck (2003), about 1931, the proposal of defectology enunciated by Vygotski began to suffer heavy attacks: Vygotski started to be accused of "not being a

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[3]   A. Binet (1857-1911), French psychologist, one of the first researchers who, along with T. Simon (1873-1961), produced a methodological system of tests to measure the level of mental development of children and study their individual differences.

[4]   G. I. Rossolimo (1860-1926), Russian psychiatrist and neurologist who developed the profile methodology for the study of individual psychological characteristics of children (VYGOTSKI, 1997c).

[5]   The word "abnormal" is used by Vygotski in several texts, in his Collected Works (VYGOTSKI, 1997a), including his first book (VIGOTSKI, 2003), where he refers to "blind", "deaf and dumb", "non-educable", "mentally disabled" and "physically disabled" children investigated in his studies. For Vygotski (2003, p.15), "the concept of normality belongs to the most difficult and indeterminate scientific notions [...] there is no such standard, but there are an innumerable amount of different variations, [...] the norm represents a purely abstract concept [...]". Sassaki (2004) considers "normal" currently a questionable and outdated concept. The author indicates that the correct approach would be to refer to the person who does not have disabilities as "people without disabilities" or "non-disabled person". The "normal" expression was used when it had been related to the texts of Vygotski in which it appeared in literal quotations.

Marxist", or "do not quote Comrade Stalin[6]" in his works (threats that were hard and forced him, in 1933, to respond to interrogatories before an inquiry committee). By this time, Vygotski became more interested in clinical psychology related studies, at the moment that we observe a drastic reduction in his studies on defectology, especially regarding blindness.

It is not agreed to Sales, Kohl and Marques (VIGOTSKI, 2011) when the authors propose that defectology currently would be the equivalent to the term "special education". According to Kozulin and Gindis (2007), the defectology is not a synonym with what is known today for special education. The defectology evolved on the basis of special education in the USSR after the Russian revolution, rising to the study and treatment of a wide variety of disabilities while special education was the subject of academic and practical discussion since the early nineteenth century (KOZULIN, 1994; MENDES, 2006). According to Mendes (2006), special education began to be drawn in the sixteenth century, with doctors and educators, challenging the current concepts, believing in the possibilities of education for disabled. To the author, though some of these few experiments, the care available to the disabled was custodial and the institutionalization in asylums and mental hospitals was the main social response to the treatment to the ones considered "deviants from the norm". Alongside the segregated service in the nineteenth century, came the "special classes" in regular schools, where students with disabilities were sent. It was, however, only in the twentieth century that a broader social response to the problems of children and adolescents education with disabilities appeared (MENDES, 2006).

Although the studies by Vygotski have been constituted in the specific context of disabilities, it is important to highlight that this does not mean that the theory by Vygotski cannot be taken now as a timely reference for the studies and debates about the education of blind people. Vygotski contribution concerning the blindness, ranks highly in all his work. Evans (2003) underlines the fact that the author has worked for years in this area suggests that his contribution is deep.

First phase of Vygotski studies on blindness

There is emphasis on the social nature of blindness implications in the author's text from the first phase of his studies on blindness (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, 1997d, 1997e). The author makes clear that blindness should be analyzed mainly in relation to psychosocial limitations arising from it; he argues that blindness affects, above all, the social relations

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[6]   Iosif Vissarionovich Djugatchvili – Josef Stalin – (1879-1953).

of blind people, not their direct interaction with the physical environment. He emphasizes that "any bodily impairment […] not only modifies the relationship between man and the world, but above all, comes about people relationships" (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, p. 73). It means that the sensory impairment causes to the people surrounding a blind person certain reactions, such as pity and overprotection that often bring on a negative influence on the deficient development. He understands that such reactions cause a blind person to be treated in a different way from that a sighted person. All these aspects are seen by the author as negative as it restricts the possibilities for blind people interaction with the environment and with others.

Starting from this idea, he even claims that blindness as psychological factor does not exist for a blind person. Vygotski (1997c) believes that as a psychological aspect, blindness does not represent a "problem"; it becomes a "problem" through a social process. In order to demonstrate that social limitation is a major obstacle in the subject's life, he sets up a comparison between the social consequences that blindness and deafness might cause. The author believes that, at first glance, it may be thought that blindness is a more serious problem than deafness, since the lack of vision limits the agile mobility. However, he comes to the conclusion that deafness brings more damage to the person, it damages the communication with others, compromising his social relationships. To the author, a blind person whose speech is not impaired has the possibility of using it as his main tool of relationship.

When indicating that blindness imposes not only physical, but mainly social restrictions, and that the educator faces these two types of restrictions when working with a blind child, Vygotski (1997e) indicates that the education should be the social compensation: once blindness changes the subject's relation to the world and brings consequences to him, the task of education is to create compensation for physical impairment through his introduction in the social world, as fully as possible. The social compensation refers, at this stage, to fight through education against the effects that deficiency provides.

The point highlighted by Vygotski (1997d) on the need for social education for blind people includes a criticism of special education system from that time, especially the German system (considered by him as a closed system for blind people). The author criticizes it noting that the special German schools shut in blind people in the narrow circle of their communities, creating small separate "worlds", in which everything was adapted and accommodated to the blindness problem, everything was centered on physical impairment, not introducing a blind person in everyday life outside the institution. To the author's understanding, blind people should be offered the domain of certain codes that could enable their communication with sighted in socially organized environments to receive the collectivity, that is, blind and sighted should be together, as much as possible.

Among these codes, he pointed out the Braille system, "this process is absolutely analogous to the visual reading of normal people, and on the psychological aspect, there is no essential difference" (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, p 75.). For him, a blind person reads exactly like the sighted, only through a different procedure: with fingers. According to the author, reading a text in German, Latin or gothic letters does not change the idea of reading: what matters is the meaning, not the sign. The sign is switched, but the meaning remains the same. Vygotski (1997e) considers at this point in his work, all these processes as related to the conditioned reflexes formation when he calls attention to the work of the Russian physiologist I. P. Pavlov (1848-1936) and the Russian physiologist, neurologist and psychologist V. M. Bejterev (1867-1927), both creators of reflexology.

The particularity of blind people education is reduced only to the change of some ways to other ways in order to form the conditional relations: blindness, in this case implies the lack of a sensory organ which may be substituted by others. Based on this theory, he develops the following argument: the formation of the conditioned reflex may be driven onto any perceptive organ, meaning that the psycho-physiological essence of education of conditioned responses in blind (the feeling of touch the dots in reading) is the same as the in sighted.

According to the pedagogical work, he considers an educators' mistake trying to overdevelop the remaining senses of blinds, idea linked to biological compensation. This concept was adopted by the pedagogy from that time in order to plan interventions related to blind people. He stresses that the problem was in a roughly physical, biological plan (VYGOTSKI, 1997c). Therefore, the indicated output for pedagogy was the adoption of social disability compensation (previously exposed idea). The author explains the myth of biological compensation, noting that, this myth claims that when a person is deprived of any sense organ, nature endows other organs to greater responsiveness. He refutes this concept, indicating that a blind person, for example, only feels better with his hands because he uses the sense of touch more frequently in his daily activities. Tact, for a blind person, is not the same as for people who can see, since blind people need to create a huge amount of links to the environment through this sense, which the sighted do by other ways. From that comes the rich functional ability of touch by a blind person, which is acquired by experience, not being innate, like a "gift" or a divine inheritance.

Regarding the education of blind, Vygotski (1997e) also highlights the value of work. For him, work is the fundamental axis around which the society life is organized. Work should be the main element guiding pedagogical actions implemented in school. The work for Vygotski can be understood as specifically the human form of using tools. Russian society at that time, defended the need for an understanding of work, which is not the same as that in a capitalist society, permeated by alienation: at that time, a school of work was advocated for.

Vygotski (1997c) reinforces the idea that blind people should not be limited to perform work "artificially", situation which excludes collective organizational elements from work, leaving blind people do their own work, as quoted: "Collaboration with a sighted should become the basis of job training" (VYGOTSKI, 1997c, p. 86). On this basis, it is considered that it creates a real communication with the sighted, when doors can be opened for blinds to the social life. To the author, blind people should be included in large industry, rather than remain limited to the narrow circle of crafts for blind that prepare them to be musicians, singers, artisans (VYGOTSKI, 1997d). With this initiative, it is possible to overcome the deficiency with full integration of blind to working life. This prescription must follow two basic principles: first, blind people must work together with sighted, never alone, isolated. Second, blind people should not specialize in one machine or one job, because to "participate in the production as conscious worker it is necessary to have a general polytechnic ground" (VYGOTSKI, 1997d, p. 70).

Summing up: when drawing attention to Vygotski's writings between 1924 and 1925, Beyer (2000) argues that, based on the theory developed by Vygotski, deficiency (specifically blindness) should be seen, not from the deficit caused by organic structure, but from the point of view of functionality or social dysfunctionality. To Vygotski the result of the "problem", perhaps because the person is blind, is much more the result of social environment influence than organic deterrent itself.

Second phase of Vygotski's studies on blindness

A change in some aspects of Vygotski's theoretical work relating to defectology study occurred mainly from reading the third edition of the Austrian psychiatrist and psychologist A. Adler (1870-1937), "Praxis und Theorie der Individualpsychologie" in 1927. In this period, we observe an emphasis on the possibility of blind people compensate or even overcompensate the disability. This theoretical viewpoint marks what is styling the second stage of the studies by Vygotski on blindness.

The concept of overcompensation is described by Adler, and it is enhanced by Vygotski when adding the issue of psychosocial context. It is through Adler that Vygotski (1997f) conceptualizes overcompensation, as follows: "any deterioration or harmful action on the body causes, on its part, defensive reactions, more energetic and stronger than necessary to paralyze the immediate danger" (VYGOTSKI, 1997f, p. 42). Overcompensation implies not easing the difficulties that arise because of the disability, but the fact that the person should tense all their forces to overlap the disability. Vygotski understood that through the process of overcompensation, the deficient, facing his organic limitations, would try to overcome psychosocial issues, what he called a full social validity.

Vygotski (1997b) explains the psychological role that carries organic defect in the development and personality formation process, following the thought of individual psychology proposed by Adler. It follows: if any organ can not comply with its work, the central nervous system and mental apparatus assume the task of compensating the defective functioning of the organ. Within the environment, a conflict caused by the mismatch of the body or poor function can lead to death or possibilities and incentives to overcompensation. In this sense, the deficiency can become a starting point and main driving force of mental personality development. If the fight ends with the victory of the organism, that not only overcomes the difficulties, but also rises to a higher level, turning disability into ability. Vygotski (1997b, 1997f) indicates, however, that this case does not occur necessarily in all blind people. Some cannot make the disability turn into a talent, which can cause the onset of traumas and neuroses.

Rosa and Ochaíta (1993) draw attention to the fact that the classic concept of compensation was taken by Vygotski in a very particular way. According to the authors, compensation in Vygotski does not imply that a psychological function compensates a missing one (because each organ specialization interfacing with the environment does not allow its replacement). According to the authors, Vygotski believes that compensation refers to a psychological system restructuring. The compensation comes up, in this second phase of his studies on blindness, a reaction of personality to disability that encouraging new development strategies replaces and balances psychological functions. The deficiency thus causes the person to create a new and peculiar kind of development. Overcompensation refers to the need not to reduce the problems arising from the defect, but tensing all strengths for its compensation.

To justify the adoption of Adler's theory on blind people education, he observes at first that these studies help to understand children development and education. The author also argues that development guarantee is given by the presence of failure, in this case the development driving forces are inadequacy and overcompensation (VYGOTSKI, 1997f). The author justifies the adoption of Adler's individual psychology, in a second time because he believes it is linked to Karl Marx's theory (1818-1883) as it stands: "A. Adler's individual psychology has a revolutionary character and his conclusions fully coincide with Marx's revolutionary sociology conclusions" (VYGOTSKI, 1997f, p. 45).

In the second phase of his studies on blindness, Vygotski (1997b) highlights three historical periods over the relationship between blind and sighted people: first, involving ancient times, the Middle Ages and part of modernity, called by the author *mystique*. In this part he explains that blindness was seen as a huge disgrace, in popular opinion blind people were seen with superstitious respect or horror.

Vygotski also indicates that blind people were also considered helpless, defenseless, abandoned or witches. The second period, which was developed in the eighteenth century, was conceptualized by Vygotski as *biological* (subject resumed by the author,

as mentioned in the first stage of his defectology studies). The third, present to his time, was named as *scientific* or *socio-psychological*. Here the author proposes Adler's individual psychology method as the perspective of the scientific present and future for the psychological study on blindness.

In the light of the overcompensation idea, Vygotski (1997b) believes that blindness does not mean only lack of vision, or that it "does not exist for blind people", as previously thought (in his first stage of studies on blindness), but causes a profound restructuring of all body powers and personality. The author understands that blindness even results as advantage:

> Blindness when creating a new and peculiar personality configuration, gives new strength, modifies the normal directions of the functions, creatively and organically restructures and forms the psyche of man. Therefore, blindness is not only a defect, deficiency, a weakness, but also, in a sense, a source of revelation of attitudes, an advantage, a power (VYGOTSKI, 1997b, p. 99).

Regarding education, Vygotski (1997f) understands pedagogy as the land of application of Adler's psychology. He emphasizes that along blindness are also given the psychological tendencies of opposite orientation, are given compensatory possibilities to overcome it and these are the skills that should be included in the educational process. Building the educational process, following the natural tendencies to overcompensate does not mean to alleviate any adversity that arises from deficiency, but intensify all strength to compensate it. To the author, the most important is that education should not rely solely on the natural strengths of development, but also in the educational objective end that should guide to full social validity, since all overcompensation processes are directed to winning a position in society.

However, Vygotski (1997f) recognizes that there is a difference between the pedagogical work that needs to be done with sighted people and the pedagogical work with blind people, for the following reason: it is unacceptable that blindness does not cause a profound singularity all along the development of a person. The author mentions that "it is true that a blind or deaf child, from the pedagogy angle may be, for matter of principle, treated as a normal one; but can do the same as a normal child in a different way, by different paths, with different means" (VYGOTSKI, 1997f, p. 50). The author thinks that the educator must know where the peculiarity of special pedagogy lies and need to follow this path to educate blind children. This peculiarity of the blind people educational process, at which educators should be aware, implies the adoption of the dominant processes concept. According to this idea, the reactions can gain strength and speed in the presence of an exciting that means opposition; this exciting meaning opposition is given by disability and explained by the ability of overcompensation. Therefore, the author states that "the potential for overcompensation is greater in the deficient" (VYGOTSKI, 1997f, p. 52).

Vygotski (1997g) sees as a particularity of the interior and exterior blind person development, a serious change in his spatial perceptions, limitation of movement and the feeling of impotence in relation to space. However, he indicates that all other strengths of a blind person may work perfectly. For Vygotski (1997b, 1997f), from the struggle between the natural spatial limitation of a blind person and the ownership of language, his personality is shaped, what he considers to belong fully to the psychological explanatory schema of the relationship between disability and compensation. Hence, the author indicates that the education process of a blind person should involve, as much as possible, communication with sighted people. He believes that the language development as a communication tool with sighted people is the fundamental way of compensation for blind people. Since the aim of a visually impaired person must be his incorporation into the social environment, the word (expressed in communicative language between blind and sighted) is very important to achieve this goal, as we exemplify by his words at this phase of his studies on blindness, "the word wins blindness" [...] (VYGOTSKI, 1997g, p. 199).

Vygotski (1997b) also considers blindness as a social psychological problem and indicates three types of "weapons" to "fight against blindness" and its consequences. The first is what the author calls the *social prophylaxis*, or *prevention of blindness*, a notion that he believes should be inculcated in large masses (the author does not explain what he means in this proposition). Through the second "weapon", *social education*, he proposes that the sighted should be educated to understand that the blind ones are equally able to develop as a sighted person. Regarding *social work of blind*, the third "weapon" to "fight blindness" Vygotski is altogether against the occupations that considered the imprisonment of the blind that promote a narrow circle of crafts, such as music, singing, crafts.

All Vygotski's theoretical arguments for blind people education that were revised in this phase, and are being entitled the second phase of Vygotski's studies on blindness, clearly show that the author believed the A. Adler's theoretical proposal. Consequently he believed the possibility of overcompensation, indicating some pedagogical options for educational practice to help blind people. We highlight, once again, that the process of overcompensation is determined by two forces: the social demands faced in the development and education and the intact forces of psyche. It indicates that social compensation has a fundamental reinforcement from social relations that were conquered by blind people: social demands, compensation processes and the use of language with sighted people shape their personality stimulating their social integration. If these situations weren't lived together, the development of blind people would be destined to another logic that he (Vygotski) doesn't know.

THIRD PHASE OF VYGOTSKI'S STUDIES ON BLINDNESS

From 1928 onwards, Vygotski's writings related to defectology changed direction again, and his understanding of the psychological development and education for blind people also changed. His researches were no longer focused only on the aspect of social education, as occurred in the first phase of his studies, nor turned to the logic of the compensation and overcompensation from Adlerian's thought as happened in the second phase. The results of his investigations in the defectology area start to involve the main theoretical arguments that would be related to his historical and cultural psychology, and it comes the third stage of studies on blindness. According to Van der Veer and Valsiner (2006), starting from 1928 Vygotski began considering the problems arising from blindness resulted from the lack of adequacy between his psycho-physiological organization, deviant of what was considered "normal" and cultural means available.

The paper "The Dynamics of Child Character" (VYGOTSKI, 1997h) also presents the option Vygotski made for Adler's theory, however with a few paragraphs devoted to the debate over the relationship, now doubtful, between Adler's individual psychology and the Marxist theory (this connection was one of the major elements that made Vygotski get interested in the Adler's writings). It is observed the transition done by Vygotski (the use of Adler's psychology to the development of studies concerning his historical-cultural psychology) in the paper "The Fundamentals of Defectology" (VYGOTSKI, 1997i). In this paper, the author combines the latest complete analysis of Adler's ideas by presenting a whole new set of concepts such as instruments, lower mental functions (of a biological nature) and higher mental functions (of a cultural nature; both integrate dialectically in human evolutionary flow) etc., all characteristics from his cultural-historical psychology.

When tracing the general theoretical lines of his cultural-historical psychology, Vygotski (1997i, 1997j) shows that the process of cultural development relates to the dominion of psychological-cultural tools, created by humanity in the historical development process. The author believes that all higher forms of intellectual activity, as well as other higher mental functions, are possible only employing culture tools. As a person who has some deficiency and has a different biological type, that in certain cases, is not suited to culturally constructed tools for people who do not have sensory, physical or other disabilities, his access to culture needs to be done through peculiar, distinct means, that give the opportunity to his cultural development. With the assistance of these procedures, Vygotski proposes that the deficient can dominate general cultural forms.

About cultural development of blind people (VYGOTSKI, 1997j), he explains that the whole apparatus is adapted to psycho-physiological "normal" organization of subjects: culture presupposes a person who holds all organs in perfect condition; all

cultural signs and symbols are destined to a "normal" type of person. The presence of someone who has different characteristics results in a mismatch between the lines of natural and cultural development. The cultural organization cannot adequately fulfill the individuality of blind people. To Vygotski (1997j), at this time, comes the required education work, which creates an artificial technique, a special system of signs or cultural symbols, adapted to the peculiarities of the deficient psycho-physiological organization. Therefore, Vygotski (1997i, 1997j) proposes that the visual writing is replaced by tactile through the introduction of Braille system, which allows blind people to compose the alphabet with different specific symbolic combinations.

From the point of psychological and biological view, how does Vygotski explain that it is possible to replace Braille writing to the traditional writing done by sighted people? The author states that the cultural form of conduct is independent from this or that psycho-physiological apparatus. The cultural development of the conduct is not tied to one or another specific function; thus, writing can be transferred from visual to tactile form. To Vygotski (1997j), the most important idea is that cultural forms of conduct are the only way to educate the deficient (for blind people). This path operates by creating diversions of development when direct paths are impossible. He understands that these deviations are critical, since

> it is only possible for higher mental functions development by means of cultural development, being indifferent to this development to follow the dominion of culture external means course (language, writing, arithmetic) or the line of perfecting inner mental functions (VYGOTSKI, 1997j, p. 187).

To Raposo (2006), the use of collateral pathways to the internalization of culture and development of higher mental functions enables blind people to constitute themselves as subjects and form a social unit. According to the researcher, this understanding developed by Vygotski gives a new quality in processes that integrate the development.

Starting from an analysis of the studies comparing the problems of the "normal" child development with the "abnormal" one, Vygotski (1997k) notes that the study of deficiency must start on the common development laws of human beings and, subsequently, to study psychological peculiarities resulting from deficiency. In establishing these common regularities, he highlights a theoretical aspect that gives credence to the idea of the social origins of human behavior: the development of higher mental functions have social origins, in both phylogeny (phylogeny is the study of the evolution of species) and ontogenesis (ontogeny studies the development of the individual within species). To the deployment of this proposition, he considers the following thesis:

> The observation of the development of superior functions shows that the formation of each function is strictly subject to the same regularity, meaning that each function appears twice in the mental development process of conduct. First, as a function of collective conduct, as a form of collaboration or interaction, as a way of social adaptation, i.e. as inter-psychological category. Secondly, as a way of individual child conduct, as a way of personal adaptation, as an inner process conduct, or as intra-psychological category (VYGOTSKI, 1997k, p. 214).

Deducing the theoretical proposal exposed by this "general law of development" is crucial to implement pedagogical actions that have the possibility to influence the development of higher processes on blind people, since Vygotski (1997k, 1997l) understands that deficiency and the small development of higher mental functions are in a different relationship to deficiency with the insufficient development of elementary mental functions: while the incomplete development of elementary mental functions occurs often by direct result of some deficiency (the author exemplifies: incomplete development of motor skills due to the blindness, the thought in mental deficiency), the incomplete development of higher mental functions in deficient appears as a secondary phenomenon, which arises on the basis of their primary characteristics. Teachers should have these notions clear; if they do not make that judgment, they might make mistakes during the work with blind people.

One of these mistakes is the belief of some educators and psychologists that all the symptoms that characterize the context of deficiency are directly derived from the disability itself. The author mentions that there are symptomatic consequences that are derived from the deficiency (biological regularities), understood as primary complications. Concomitantly, he understands that there are secondary complications (including tertiary etc.) that do not arise from organic deficiency itself but from its originating symptoms, in other words, they appear as a complex superstructure from the basic framework of development. Vygotski (1997k, 1997l) understands that the incomplete development of higher mental functions appear as a secondary complication.

How does this process unfold? Vygotski (1997k) explains that the root of a particular disability (major complication) creates in the deficient a number of particularities that block the "normal" development of collective communication, collaboration and interaction with people around him. The separation of the deficient towards the community, featuring an exile (separation of the collectivity) of the person, on the other hand, determines the incomplete development of higher mental functions. The incomplete development of superior processes is not conditioned by the primary mode deficiency, but secondary. Kozulin and Gindis (2007) help to clarify this point, indicating that a primary defect is an early, sensorial, organic or neurological impairment, which influences the development of elementary functions (perception, memory, communication, and so on). The secondary

influence stems from the social consequences of the primary defect (on the social situation of development). That is the point of distinction on which educators must pay attention: distinguishing a primary from a secondary complication in the development of the deficient is a prerequisite both for a correct understanding of the theory involved in theoretical and pedagogical planning, and also for practical actions that should occupy the teacher while educating deficient students.

The fact that some educators fail to distinguish primary from secondary complications causes the pedagogical actions are not focused on the cultural determinants. Thus, all pedagogical aspirations become oriented to attempt advancing elementary processes, those pedagogical aspirations expressed through the doctrine of sensory-motor education, education of isolated senses, what Vygotski calls "training": in this case, the child with some deficiency is not taught to think, but to differentiate colors, sounds etc. Vygotski (1997k, 1997l) states that none of these procedures will ever be able to replace the missing visual images: these procedures are directed to the path of lower mental functions, which considers less educable, as they depend directly on organic factors that are irreversible.

Vygotski (1997k) highlighted that another mistake some educators and psychologists make, is characterized by the belief that sensory restriction neutralizes the development of higher mental functions. This mistake restricts educational actions to the effort to strengthen the missing sensory pathways. These educational activities - focused on the missing sensory pathways - are considered as direct attempts to deal with the problem, occurring through the training of touch and hearing, based on a misconception of a supposed "sixth sense of blind people".

In this third phase of studies on blindness, it is observed that the compensation for the consequences of blindness is focused on the development of higher mental functions field (concepts, the development of abstract thinking, collaboration between people). The author states that the blind person is fully capable of operating with abstract knowledge and the lack of a sense has no effect on his thinking development. According to Vygotski (1997k) the limits of the higher processes development overcome what he calls "training". The thinking development according to the concept is the superior form of compensation of insufficient representations (VYGOTSKI, 2006a, 2006b). The evolution culminating in the thinking through concepts occurs with the development of three major basic stages, subdivided into several phases: the first was termed by Vygotski as formation of syncretic image; the second formation of complexes; the third, conceptual training.

What he considers essential is that conceptual elaboration, like all higher psychological processes, expands on the collective activity process: "only the cooperation leads to the formation of children's logic, only the socialization of children's thinking [...] leads to the formation of concepts" (VYGOTSKI, 1997k, p. 230). The possibility of

development of higher mental functions that interaction and collaboration promote for the participants from the same classroom is achieved through the use of language as a tool to develop the concept. According to Vygotski (1997i), the destiny of the whole cultural development of a blind person depends on whether or not he masters the language as a fundamental psychological tool.

Within the framework of theoretical production of defectology by Vygotski, it is at this stage that the qualitative leap regarding his proposition about the concept of compensation occurs. This is when one can tell the difference, objectively, as Adler's compensation concept was seen and how Vygotski reinterprets, points out and exemplifies it, even though the author does not abandon the notion of compensation, but uses, surpassing Adler's discussions showing the importance of this concept in the development and learning processes of blind people.

One of the highlights taken from the analysis of Vygotski's texts of the third phase of studies on deficiency is the need that education has to give blind people access to cultural instruments historically constructed by society. It is noteworthy that Vygotski highlights that cultural axis assumes progression of higher mental functions, which emphasizes the power that interference of education exerts in people's lives, whether they are deficient or not.

Beyer (2000) stresses that, for Vygotski, sensory gaps of blind people do not mean (or are not synonymous) cognitive level. Rather, the impossibility that some people have to see (triggered by a biological imposition) has exactly their compensation in the possibility of conceptual training. It is worth remembering what Vygotski (1997j) points as fundamental when considering the development of blind people: cultural development is the fundamental domain which results possible compensation of failure; where it is impossible to a subsequent organic development, thus indefinitely, opens the path of cultural development.

Final considerations

Three thematic axes were highlighted in which the positions of the theoretical and practical work of Vygotski and about the psychology and pedagogy of blind people, explained in Volume V of his Collected Works (VYGOTSKI, 1997a), can be understood. These axes are divided into: a first phase corresponding to the writings produced between 1924 and 1925, highlighting the importance of social education of blind people. The second phase, in which the thought of the author emphasizes the possibility of compensation or even overcompensation for blind people, under the influence of Adler's work, especially in 1927. Finally the third phase, containing the main aspects of cultural-historical psychology, proposed since 1928.

While reading the Volume V (VYGOTSKI, 1997a), in order to reach the goal planned for this paper, we realized that the texts of this collection had a diffused sequencing order. The order does not follow the steps organization listed here, hindering the understanding and making the reader to have a limited understanding of the author's ideas about blindness since it was concluded that these ideas suffered evolution. This fact led to the proposition that future studies on blindness, guided by Volume V, must follow a different reading order than the one suggested by Russian publishers. The works included in this reading sequence are:

- First phase: "The Psychology and Pedagogy of Children's Handicaps" (VYGOTSKI, 1997c); "Principles of Education for Physically Handicapped Children" (VYGOTSKI, 1997d); "Principles of Social Education for the Deaf-Mute Child" (VYGOTSKI, 1997e).

- Second phase: "Defect and Compensation" (VYGOTSKI, 1997f); "The Blind Child" (VYGOTSKI, 1997b); "Working with Mentally Retarded and Physically Handicapped Children" (VYGOTSKI, 1997g).

- Third phase: "The Fundamentals of Defectology" (VYGOTSKI, 1997i); "The Collective as a Factor in the Development of the Abnormal Child" (VYGOTSKI, 1997k); "Sociocultural Theory and Education of Children with Special Needs: From Defectology to Remedial Pedagogy" (VYGOTSKI, 1997j); "Compensatory Processes in the Development of the Retarded Child" (VYGOTSKI, 1997l).

The result of this study is long and detailed, but it was considered crucial to disclose it because it was evaluated that could make a significant contribution to the researchers involved in studies of blindness in Vygotski's works. It means to say, also, that there is the need to perform further research so that the topics discussed here can be explored, willing to dialogue with the results presented.

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CHAPTER 10

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY ON WRITING IN AN E-LEARNING PEDAGOGY COURSE IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

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Introduction

The importance of written language for society is unquestionable. We can say that the creation of writing left a singular mark in human history. It is said that writing is an extension of the human brain and such thinking goes beyond the premise that, more than a possibility to record information, it carries within itself the possibility of providing unthinkable social and cognitive benefits before this advent. The grammatical structures of languages and dialects evolution enable humans to express any information and feelings, in the past, present or future, without making use of sounds or gestures.

However, it is particularly observed in Brazil a series of problems related to writing use - as it was observed in studies by Soares (2008) with regard to basic education, by Suehiro research (2006) on elementary school and, in investigations by Vitória and Christófoli (2013), Damiani et al. (2011) and Ramires (2002) related to higher education (college) – just to name some research that converge on the same problem. We observed serious difficulties with written expression, including university students, which leads us to a necessary reflection on the quality of teaching on how to write in Brazil and the effectiveness of didactic activities practiced by the Brazilian formal education system.

Given this context, the present work is part of a research results that had as main objective to investigate the possible evolution of the practice of written language by undergraduate students from an E-learning Pedagogy Course. This study was based on four pedagogic interventions, that aimed at improving their written productions, included in a historical period of three years and a half - that made it possible to analyze academic papers written by undergraduate students, from their first texts to the final paper (TCC).

Having as theoretical and methodological basis the Cultural-Historical Approach, the study also sought to verify the development of higher mental functions (HMF) awareness

and control, voluntary attention and thinking through concepts - as consequences of complex cognitive exercises involved in the act of writing. This article focuses specifically on formal teaching and on learning through concepts, as the social relevance and the cognitive benefits of working with scientific concepts in higher education.

Principles related to Cultural-Historical Approach have supported studies in various fields of knowledge. Particularly in education, the ideas of Lev Vygotsky, Alexander Luria and Alexei Leontiev underlie educational researches and practices at several levels. Apart from important concepts of the theory developed by Vygotsky, studies of post-Vygotskian and others authors with this perspective also contributed to the construction of the framework that supports this study – fundamentally the studies of Vasily Davydov on the importance of working with concepts in formal education and human intellectual development.

Upon the theoretical and methodological implications derived from this reference, the present study allows the hypothesis that work with scientific concepts in formal education in addition to being essential for the maintenance of knowledge accumulated by human, significantly contributes to the student's learning process and to their cognitive development, considering the level of abstraction that is demanded by the thought through concepts. About the writing exercise, in particular, assumes that it is essential to work with concepts of Portuguese language and written language (textual production) when it comes to prerogatives of higher education and teacher training (Pedagogy courses).

The complexity of writing

Particularly for Vygotsky, verbal language plays a central role in educational training and development of human mental processes. According to him (Vygotski, 1931/1995; Vygotsky, 1934/1982), the world of language allows us to acquire (learn) and expose (communicate with each other) knowledge and information through social relations. And it was no wonder that Vygotsky placed the language in a central position of his theory. When pondering about higher mental functions, for example, Vygotski (1931/1995) explained that they are directly linked to human abilities to create auxiliary means to intervene on nature and relate socially, culturally and historically, and these relations only can be established through the use of verbal language.

When investigating the relationship between thought and language, Vygotsky emphasized writing as a cultural tool of great importance for thought and, consequently, for the development of HMF (Vygotski, 1931/1995). According to the author, writing is

"the most powerful language, because it forces the child[1] to act in a more intellectual way" (Vygotsky, 1934/1982, p. 204). Writing, for Vygotsky (1934/1982), is the most intellectual of languages.

As stated by Koch (2003) and Citelli (1994), to write a good text requires knowledge of varied nature (linguistic, cognitive, pragmatic, socio-historical and cultural). And it is not a simple task. Damiani et al. (2011, p. 2) complements this thought emphasizing that "writing is not only putting letters on paper, but also developing a comprehensive and precise meaning of a particular communicative situation and make it understandable to an audience". These last researchers even claim that their teaching practice in higher education has shown that many students are surprised to be told that their writing presents problems or that their texts are not fully understandable. The authors report that these students' texts are not able to reproduce minimal, orderly and coherent ideas that support the course of the intended thinking - in case of an argument, for example.

Following the same line of thinking, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) explain that the act of writing involves significant mental activities, such as setting goals, planning, content search in the memory, problem solving, evaluation and diagnosis of content and forms of writing. Furlanetto (2001) emphasizes that it is not easy to compose a written text, even if it's only a note. The author adds that this effort has been accomplished by many people, though few materialize long texts: articles, communications, reports, theses etc. - not to mention texts that strive for aesthetics. Therefore, we are aware that there is a great distance between thinking, speaking and writing.

In Vitória and Christófoli (2013) opinion, it is necessary to consider the text as a result of a process, consisting of permanent exercises that the student must perform. Their own activities include the writing process stages ranging from pre-development (which includes all kinds of exercises, experiences or activities whose purpose is to encourage the creation, selection and organization of ideas and facts before starting the draft text), passing to the development itself, which is the task of transposing ideas for a text that respects the conventions of the textual genre and language requested; after selecting the observations and comments of readers (who may be family members, peers, teachers), reaching the review, which includes the partial or complete reworkings, taking into account the comments received; to writing extensively reviewed, consisting of the final presentation of the text. To do so, we insist on the task of self-correction as a way of thinking the writing production as a permanent activity of adjustments and (re)workings.

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[1]   And also adults.

Based on experiences as student, teacher, pedagogical coordinator and researcher, and guided by research on the problems in writing in higher education, as mentioned above, I consider it's necessary, in addition to studies that point and underline the problems of writing initiatives, to propose ways, strategies and pedagogical interventions that can contribute positively to the improvement of this disturbing reality. Following this line of thinking, this research presents a proposal that comes from the hypothesis that systematic pedagogical interventions can contribute to writing improvement of higher education students in several fields of knowledge.

In concern with the empirical context in which this study sets (a Pedagogy Course), I advocate the importance of these courses role to improve academic writing – the training of these professionals, who will be, after college graduation, responsible for alphabetization, literacy and writing ability development of children, teenagers and adults around the country.

In higher education, specifically, we expect greater mastery of written language by students, but that is taking place in Brazilian universities and can be evidenced in research conducted by Vitória and Christófoli (2013), Damiani et al. (2011) and Ramires (2002). It is essential, so, that we study this phenomenon better, as proposed by the present study.

It's important, otherwise, exchange with other realities, another countries such as, for example, the studies of Pohl (2007) August et al. (2007) – both made in Germany. The latter, a longitudinal study on the development of writing competence from the base of formal education, the Primary School. In concern of strategies for teaching of writing, at all educational levels, in a recent exchange, specifically at the University of Siegen, it was possible to know the writing studies conducted by teachers Clemens Knobloch (2001) and Wolfgang Steinig (2006), for example. In this experience, it was possible to perceive some similarities between Brazilian and German students in concern to their writing difficulties.

Another contemporary writing relevant point is related to virtual/online use of writing. The twenty-first century E-learning, that was a promise in the past and today is a reality in many people's lives, is characterized by the use of technological advances - essentially in the areas of computing and telecommunications. The E-learning courses (the virtual/online Education) are based on Learning Management Systems (LMS) - virtual educational platforms on which several forms of interaction among users are possible (students, teachers, coordinators, counselors, tutors etc.). In these virtual/online spaces, the communication through written language is the protagonist, it is essential. In the LMS *Moodle*[2] (Modular

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[2]   One of the most popular LMS in the world and the most popular in Brazil, used in educational projects to increase access to education developed by the Open University of Brazil (UAB) and the UNA-SUS (Open University of the Health System - SUS).

Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment)*, virtual learning environment used by the academic students who participated on this research, the tools of virtual interaction are strongly based on communication and interactions through writing language.

The use of courses bases on E-learning model is an interesting phenomenon in Brazil. The number of E-learning courses, at several knowledge areas, is growing year after year. The internet, by the end of 2013, was already used by about 2.7 billion people around the world, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)[3]. Brazil, the third country in the world in number of internet users, in 2013, according to this same source, reached the milestone of 50% of its inhabitants as internet users, which means almost 100 million people.

According to the latest Census of Higher Education in Brasil - 2012 (MEC, 2014), in the 2011-2012 period, the number of enrollments in higher education institutions increased 17.1%: 12.2% in E-learning courses and 3.1% in the traditional in-person courses. With this growth, E-learning model already represents more than 15% of total enrollment in undergraduate courses, and students who opted to study on this model, the majority (40.4%) attends a training courses - such as Pedagogy.

Besides all, it is significant to observe the writing in this intense technological expansion context, because the virtual writing, as in any other daily activities, is not the same as before. Marcuschi (2001) explains that the possibility to construct and edit texts with resources like cutting, copying and pasting, and the non-sequential and non-linear nature of writing, not only affect the way we read, but also dramatically affect the way we write. This process provides forms of distribution of intelligence and reasoning, different from writing that was practiced before the advent of these resources. It is therefore necessary to consider how we can incorporate these tools in teaching writing skills.

TEACHING AND LEARNING BY CONCEPTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION: CULTURAL-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this subsection, recognizing the practice of concept formation by people as an important mental process, it highlights the importance of the relationship between education (school and university) and ownership (by learners) of concepts in formal education – with foundation in the Cultural-Historical perspective. The term concept formation is discussed throughout Vygotsky's work, mainly in (Vygotsky, 1934/1982) and (Vygotski, 1931/1995). In several passages, the author refers to this process –

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[3]   More details on: http://www.itu.int/.

mental practice through concepts – with the major responsibility for the training and development of psychological higher functions. Davydov (1988a) considered that the formation of this quality of thought [by concepts] performs an essential influence on the development of all other higher functions, allowing autonomy to the person in the appropriation-production of new knowledge.

Vygotsky (1934/1982) called spontaneous concepts (SPC) those acquired in everyday life coming from concrete experiences from immediate relations with the world; and scientific concepts (SCC), the ones that constitute the accumulated systematized knowledge of mankind (laws of physics, math, periodic table, alphabet, grammar etc.), which are taught (or ought to be) in educational processes.

According to Vygotsky's (1934/1982) explanations, the main distinction in the appropriation of SPC[4] and SCC is the link between them and their awareness of the subject. The SPC, according to him, are seized in situations that consciousness is focused on the phenomenon, to the context, and not for its definition. The SCC, on the other hand, are characterized by abstraction, since they are located in the theoretical, intellectual level. In Cultural-Historical Approach view, in order to appropriate to these last ones, it is necessary that the subject's consciousness is deliberately directed at them, or take any chances of not having their effective ownership.

Vygotsky (1934/1982) claimed that, by their distinct characteristics, is not appropriate for SCC and SPC in the same way, although there is a close link between them:

> Both types of concepts have different characteristics and there is no way to appropriate scientific concepts following the same procedures that you learn everyday concepts [spontaneous]. It means that the attempt to promote a "natural learning", inserting the student in situations of use of knowledge may not be as amenable to conceptual learning as we often think. We need the concept to be explicit, so it can be cognized by the students provided an instrument of generalization (p. 88).

A scientific concept not only indicates the existence of a particular content to which it refers, but at the same time, it is related to other concepts that, when appropriate, establish new relationships with other concepts in a systematic and scalable network movement. The appropriation of this concept as well as the development of relationship networks that covers other concepts is considered by authors such as Vygotsky

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4   Also known in specialized literature for 'quotidian'.

(1934/1982), Luria (1992), Leontiev (1978) and Davydov (1988a, 1988b) as a cognitive process elevating human thought beyond the immediate empirical world.

Supported in studies of Davydov, Sforni (2004) explains that taking ownership of a concept does not mean only defining and operating it, but mainly making yourself aware of the conceptual framework employed in it. The author adds that to do so it is required a new quality of thinking organization, different from the one that develops in contact only with SPC. According to Davydov (1988a), the development of theoretical thinking is, at the same time, condition and result of SCC ownership.

Among the typical aspects of formal educational processes, Vygotsky (1934/1982) paid special attention to the appropriation of scientific concepts since, according to him, his mastery is fundamental so qualitative and psychological changes in human mind take place. The author emphasizes that the new element, acquired by the appropriation of a concept lies not only in increasing the appropriate content by the subject, but also the quality of learning generalizations and conceptual abstractions given to his thought.

The subject-object interaction (person-concept) implies the use of symbolic mediations (systems, diagrams, maps, models, signs, in a broad sense) found in culture and science historically developed and built by mankind. The construction and reconstruction of the study object form the process of appropriation from which restructures the students thinking - promoting, thus, their intellectual development.

Nevertheless, appropriating the content of a concept is not a simple task. Davydov understood that harnessing the potential of pedagogical work with concepts, by the school, is still insufficient and proposed to overcome the theoretical empirical thinking by:

> When starting the mastery of any curriculum area, students, with the help of teachers, analyze the content of the curriculum materials and identify in it overall primary relationship and, at the same time, they find that this relationship is manifested in many other private relationships found in this particular material. When registering, through some referential way, the major general relationship identified, students construct, therefore, a substantive abstraction of the subject studied. Continuing the analysis of curriculum materials, they detect a regular link with this primary relationship with its several manifestations, thus obtaining a substantial generalization of the subject studied. Therefore, children consistently use abstraction and generalization attached to the concrete to deduce (again with the help of the teacher) and other more particular abstractions to join them in the full object (concrete) studied. When students begin to use the initial abstraction and generalization as means to deduce and join other abstractions, they convert the initial mental structures into a concept that represents the "core" of the subject studied. This "core" is used subsequently to children as a general principle whereby they can orient themselves in the diversity of factual curriculum materials that have to assimilate, in a conceptual way, by ascending from the abstract to the concrete (DAVYDOV, 1988b, p. 22).

Davydov's ideas about teaching developmental refer, basically speaking, for educational practices strongly geared to the theoretical thinking - without forgetting, of course, its relations with the empirical world - through education and ownership of content (scientific concepts). According to this view, the appropriation of content ascends the mental processes of learners/students to more complex levels of thinking. And the appropriation of new content, combined with the increased capacity of these learners to perform more abstractions and generalizations, raises his mental processes to increasingly complex levels.

Sforni and Galuch (2006) indicate the way to overcome in formal educational contexts using the linkage between 'teaching content' and 'teaching thinking':

> Based on this understanding, it is not justified the opposition between teaching content and teaching thinking that is common in [Brazilian] school environments. The development of cognitive skills that enable thinking occurs precisely in learning the content. The acquisition of knowledge and the development of psychic abilities do not occur as two independent processes; form and content are correlated as a single process of development of the human psyche (p. 3).

This stance is that the present study sympathizes, since it is based on Vygotsky's and Davydov's views that the SCC, with its systematic and hierarchical system of interrelationships, seems to constitute the environment in which awareness and mastery of knowledge development.

In particular with regard to teaching concepts related to writing, Sforni and Galuch (2006) call the attention to the fact that, although there are indications in the academic literature that learning written language is not only a perceptual and motor process, but also conceptual, few studies on conceptual learning of this skill have been taken as a basis for understand his didactic organization in Brazilian educational contexts. So, we need to move forward on this subject, because thinking about teaching and learning of writing as conceptual processes also means thinking about the didactic-methodological referrals teaching this skill. As Schopenhauer said (2011, p. 7): "when we learn to write, we will be extending and refining our collection of concepts".

Sforni and Galuch (2006) argue that, like any conceptual appropriation, it is necessary that the teaching of written language is organized to make aware to the student the content that he is being taught. In this process, the teacher mediation is essential, since the student does not appropriate the meaning of a concept only to be inserted in the proper environment; the direct interaction with the object of knowledge is important, but not always sufficient. The role of formal education is crucial in this regard.

In educated societies, formal educational institutions play a special role in the dynamic insertion of men and women in society, and they are also considered responsible for building the foundation for their cognitive development. The school, in this context, works with the contents of the several areas of knowledge and, undoubtedly, somehow contributes to the intellectual development of students. However, as Sforni (2004) has observed in his most recent studies on teaching concepts of written language, the contributions of formal education [in Brazil] do not allow such significant results regarding the potential of the work using these concepts with students.

Davydov (1988a) declared that, in an educational practice whose influence on the development of the psychic functions is small, that contributes more to an empirical form of thinking, students tend to have difficulties in thinking with concepts. The generalization and the abstraction, derived from the conceptual organization of grammar, for example, end up not bringing the exercise of thought to higher levels (as they could) in many educational practices.

Davydov (1988a), as well as Vygotsky, Luria and Leontiev (1988), argued that good teaching is the one that produces learning and leads to development. However, Sforni (2004) emphasizes that, in order to have the internal development processes triggered, it is necessary to have access to learning situations that provide thinking from the learning of concepts. As Davydov (1998b) said: education is the component human activity oriented to develop the thought by means of student learning (theoretical concepts, generalization, analysis, synthesis, logical thinking), since elementary school.

But it is not always like this that happens in formal education. Considering the situation of teaching writing, in Brazilian basic education it is notorious the great room in syllabus aimed at teaching the Portuguese language. However, for several factors, it seems that all this room has not achieved the expected results regarding the learning of writing by students (Soares, 2008; Suehiro, 2006). In higher education, and also in postgraduate courses, serious writing problems are more and more common (Castro, 2014; Vitória and Christófoli, 2013; Damiani et al., 2011; Ramires, 2002).

Research methods

This chapter makes part of a historical research, considering, as Vygotski advocated (1931/1995), the development of a process, not looking only at its beginning and its end. It was analyzed the development of the Pedagogy course students' writing for a period of three and a half years (from 2009/2 to 2012/2), which included from their early academic papers, going through several others until the writing of the final paper (called TCC in Brazilian academics context).

In a qualitative approach of data collection and analysis, with all investigative process conducted online, it was used to collect data: notes (Viana, 2007), textual

analysis (Gil, 2010), questionnaire (Gil, 2010) and interview (Symanski, Almeida and Brandini, 2004). Data analysis from notes, questionnaire and interview was anchored in text and discourse analysis, as proposed by Moraes (2003) templates: considered as a self-organizing process to produce new understandings in relation to phenomena that it examines from a rigorous and careful analysis. Data analysis from the students' texts was performed following the Textual Linguistics perspective (mainly the Koch's works) and the Brazilian Portuguese grammar from Bechara (2009).

It was an interventional study, linked to historical and cultural precepts, as postulated Luria (1985, 1992) who examined after a series of investigations based on observations on different cultures, that it is through the constant intervention of other people that complex psychological and instrumental processes begin to take shape. The proposal intervention of this research follows the perspective advocated by Damiani et al. (2014), based on five points:

1. the intention of producing changes;

2. the attempt to solve a problem;

3. the applied feature;

4. the need for dialogue with a theoretical framework;

5. the possibility of producing knowledge.

The proposed intervention was based on the hypothesis that intervening in the students' texts pointing out their formal problems, they would become aware of them and could control their mistakes improving their written expression. Four pedagogical interventions were carried out: 1. *Introduction, development and conclusion: intervening in the macrostructure of academic texts* (2010/1); 2. *Orienting of writing abstracts and articles* (2011/2); 3. *Writing Workshop: "I write, but do they understand?"* (2012/1) and; *4. Virtual Environment to Writing Support: Writing the final paper* (2012/2).

The researched class was part of E-learning Pedagogy course integrating the Open University of Brazil (UAB). In class situated at Balneario Pinhal UAB Pole, at baseline (2009/2), there were 42 students enrolled and participating in activities at the Pole and at the LMS Moodle. The class was intentionally selected by the researcher because he was their teacher during three semesters. Thirty-two students accomplished the course, graduating in Pedagogy and becoming qualified teachers to work in primary school and adult education.

Three female students were intentionally selected for monitoring and further research: Annia, Branka and Yeva[5]. The option for these students considered their different skills in writing, in addition to their availability to participate in the study and interact online with the researcher.

The data analysis followed the three stages of discursive textual analysis (Moraes, 2003): unitarization, categorization and communication. After data unitarization, three categories were defined with theoretical content, aimed to the analyzes of the three higher mental functions and their relationship to the act of writing: *awareness of the writing problems*, *voluntary attention to writing* and *working with Portuguese language concepts*. Next, as part of the communication stage, the focus will be centered on questioning *working with Portuguese language concepts* and the findings related to categories of linguistic nature: *textual macrostructure, use of textual organizers* and *punctuation*. The intention is to establish relationships between the development of the students' writing and the work with concepts of Portuguese language and textual production practiced on the course.

Communication: the findings

In this subsection, considering the article size limits, the results coming from categories of linguistic analysis will be briefly presented. Then their relationship will be established with the reports of academic work on the concepts of Portuguese language and textual production throughout the Pedagogy course, as well as initiatives undertaken by research through pedagogical interventions (Damiani et al., 2014).

For the analysis of *textual macrostructure* category, we took as basis the following Koch (2003) assumption: in order to consider a text cohesion, it is necessary to present topical continuity, in other words, that the progression is performed so that no disruptions or lengthy interruptions of the topic in progress occur; insertions and digressions of this type require some sort of justification for the meaning construction and, therefore, cohesion, will not be jeopardized - constituting an organizing principle of discourse. Branka and Annia started the course writing quite deficient texts with regard to textual macrostructure: without using paragraphs, without establishing common thread between the arguments, and without the use of the assumption of textual organization (Citeli, 1994) - introduction, development and conclusion (Intervention 1).

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[5]   In this research, we chose not to reveal the students real names as well the name of the university which the Pedagogy course is linked.

Over the semesters, the structure of their texts was improved, culminating in the final paper which presented very good textual macrostructure, related to Annia and Branka's papers, and excellency related to Yeva's paper. However, at the end of the analysis in question, the need for greater theoretical foundation in linguistic concepts which contribute to the improvement of their texts with regard to the flow of the argument was latent. I highlight here the concept of paragraphing proposed by Koch (2003). This author explains that even though one might think that the use of paragraphs is just a stylistic choice or merely typographic (and they also perform these functions), with the indentation the structure of the textual product is grounded. According to Koch (2003), the reader is comfortable without much effort to realize that each indentation, a new formulation begins – collaborating to organize the author's arguments in the interlocutor's mind. By mastering this concept, for example, the texts of the three academic students could achieve higher levels of quality in the flow of argument skills.

With regard to the *use of textual organizers* category, the results show improvement in Annia, Branka and Yeva's texts from the earliest texts to the final version of their final paper[6], highlighting the issues: 'increased use of textual organizers' and 'increased repertoire of textual organizers used'. In the first issue, the increase is not linked only to the texts length increase, but also proportionally. It is relevant the proportional increase of organizers regarding the total number of words in Branka and Ania's texts - Yeva maintained good proportion of organizers since her early texts written for the course. On the second issue, even using in most cases conjunctions most commonly adopted, such as *that, and, thus, but* and *also,* several others were used in their final paper. In this aspect, emphasis on the variety used by Yeva in the final version of her paper: 76 different types of organizers over 103 pages. The expressive use of conjunction phrases[7] by the three students in their final paper was a surprisingly positive factor. All of them, based on the analysis of the final papers, demonstrate to connect their ideas through this resource with relevant frequency.

However, the absolute and proportional number of wrong uses of textual organizers also deserve mentioning. Even the analysis of this category having generated evidence of the three academic progress regarding the use of organizers in their final paper, it

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[6]   To construct this analysis category, we recorded all textual organizers used by the three students in their early writings for the course and in their final papers. The quality of their use was also investigated, one by one, following what Bechara's Grammar (2009) advocates, in each case, besides the principles linked to the textual linguistics - essentially Koch's (2003, 2010).

[7]   Expressions developed by the students that function as conjunctions in texts - called by Bechara (2009) conjunction phrases. Basically, these elements connect clauses or, within the same sentence, words or arguments.

was still noticeable the lack of theoretical knowledge about the use of some of them. Under the use of conjunction phrases, Annia, for example, made more mistakes than accurate application of them, 37% (81 correct and 135 incorrect uses), it was evident that she did not have a clear idea of the importance of punctuation (commas) to completeness of the linguistic resource effectiveness. Branka and Yeva made more accurate applications than mistakes, but still accounted for low percentages of correct answers, respectively, 57.28% and 58.82%.

About the most common conjunctions (Bechara, 2009), we highlight the struggle of using one particular conjunction (*where*) in the whole group including the three aforementioned students. About these last ones, the incorrect use of this conjunction was present in all analyzed texts. The numbers related to the application of the conjunction 'where' in Yeva's final paper, who has the best writing in the group, for example, were very bad: four right ones and nine wrong applications (30.77%). Annia was also badly: 17 correct and 31 wrong uses (35.41%). Branka was better than the others using this articulator, with a reasonable use of 69.23% (nine right and four wrong). It is likely that this difficulty is a consequence of the presence of the speaking (SPC) in writing, because it is a recurring error in popular language, often incorporated into the written language. In passages that *'where'* should be used as an adverb of place (Bechara, 2009), in its misuse ends up performing the same function as conjunctions *in which*, *what*, detached from its proper function, linked to place.

In the category *punctuation,* after heavy investment in pedagogical interventions regarding its use, substantial advances at the end of the course were seen and presented in the final version of Annia, Branka and Yeva's paper. The extreme long periods (problem evidenced in writing of all students researched) decreased, but it is not yet possible to state that the three students mastered the concepts of clause and period, as it was attempted to work pedagogically along the interventions. It is still more difficult to consider that they hold the perception of the subtleties of the language involving the choice of size of periods to produce meaning over an argument, as explained Lukeman (2011). It is understood that the problems with punctuation could be minimized if the students had learned, for example, the concepts of phrase, clause and where the use of comma is obligatory. The concepts regarding the use of the comma would also help as the use of conjunctions and conjunctive phrases, reducing mistake rates ascertained in the use of these resources.

Branka and Yeva's testimonials, caught from the interview, converge with what was observed on working with concepts of Portuguese language and textual production along the Pedagogy course, as will be shown below. Yeva straightly answered that there was no directed teaching to Portuguese language during the course, but relativized her answer suggesting that she did not miss it:

> *Yeva - Directed no. Not with much focus on this sense. I think the concern of course was more focused on the specific contents of Education, yet we were always warned that we had to read more and review our writing.*

She reported that the Pedagogy course "*was more focused on the specific contents of Education*". Herein lies a worrying lack of knowledge of the student about what should be taught in a training course for teachers, because teaching concepts of Portuguese language is inherent in a Pedagogy course.

Branka was more emphatic without relativizing, demonstrating she believed she should have been more demanded by the Pedagogy course, and that she regrets today due to the lack of contents related to spelling and grammar in the course:

> *Branka - More or less, I think there should be more demands, more spelling, more grammar[...] it is important to the teaching of Portuguese language in Pedagogy courses. I sometimes get worried about making a note on my schedule and students' parents see the teacher writing incorrectly, [in] my daily planning too.*

To Branka, the gap seems to be latent, as when answering the first question of the online interview 'Comment a little on your experience as a student in a E-learning course (advantages and disadvantages of studying based on a virtual-online model)', her first choice to *disadvantage* was the lack of theory:

> *Branka - [...] one disadvantage I think more missed theory because we had a lot of practice during the course. Today as a professional I miss more theoretical support, other [authors] besides Freire.*

With regard to teaching the concepts of written language, Sforni and Galuch (2006) argue that access to spelling, grammatical and linguistic systems allow students to become aware of their own activity as language user and thus achieve a higher level in the language development. The appropriation of grammatical systems, however, is not spontaneous, it requires mediation intentionally organized fundamentally through formal education. To Davydov (1988a), grammar and language should be worked with the student to the point it becomes necessary for the completion of their actions.

Nevertheless, interaction with the object of knowledge is important, but not sufficient. Based on this assumption, both in the Writing Workshop (Intervention 3), as in the writing of final paper (Intervention 4), resources as suggestions for books and language and grammar sites (acc picture 1) were available. In the Writing Workshop was also possible to work with concepts of Portuguese and textual production (as the symbol indicating crasis, comma, cohesion and coherence, connectives) in the activities proposed in the forums. These moments were very intense and very rich, because some materials were brought by the students themselves and counted with the collaboration of classmates.

Figure 1: Material on Portuguese language and writing available on the Writing Workshop (Intervention 3) and orientation of the final paper (Intervention 4)

It is noteworthy that the availability of the material was simultaneous to the performance of activities with the intention to promote precisely this relationship between theory and practice. When asked about the use of these resources, by the interventions, in the online interview, so they responded:

Annia - There was a book I really liked, The Art of Writing [Arthur Schopenhauer] where I learned to set out on paper everything that was in our thought and thinking and ideas for the completion of the following papers. Actually I used the book I studied about the importance of writing and some papers I did during the course that you (teacher) evaluated me and the texts telling me what I should redo was where he helped me a lot because there you showed me that I should understand what I wrote.

Branka - I used "the 4 types to use the "why" and "because"" and the material on the verbs that you pointed me. [...] It was very useful in my paper, the rules, I mean.

Yeva - I do not remember the name of the sites available in the workshop, but I liked the one that we can do the conjugation of verbs, also there was a material that talked about cohesion and coherence [...] another important one was about the use of comma, subject on which we discussed in the forum [...] And if I am not mistaken, there was also a virtual dictionary.

It is rewarding to know that all of them used in some way, part of the material available, some more, some less. It was noticeable in the guidelines of the articles (Intervention 2), the Writing Workshop (Intervention 3) and interventions in the writing of final paper (Intervention 4) motivation by students to work with SCC of Portuguese language and textual production. They seemed to want to study them and learn with them. And this happened not only with Annia, Branka and Yeva, but also with other students in the class researched and from other Poles.

On pedagogical interventions directed to their writings, they expressed:

Annia - *Your opinions were of much importance to me, because with each paper I realized what I should improve giving me the chance to grow and move on because I put on paper what was in my mind, all I wanted to speak, not worrying about whether it was correct or not. And every time I sent the text I was looking forward to what you would reply me, knowing that I could grow through it.*

Branka - *You has always been positive, because I felt really focused, knowing you had actually read my work and given it a lot of importance and so give all suggestions and highlights [...] I'll be grateful to you for all my life! However my tutor guided me, I was not fully supported, with your help everything became clearer, especially because of your prompts.*

Yeva - *I always identified with you and would like to know as much as you know about "writing", and remember that you always complimented me about my writing at the same time you gave your "tips" in order to reassess some points [...] Having a more individual monitoring was very important at that crucial moment of end of the course doing the final paper.*

The three reports indicate the interventions' positive reception and this success can also be checked by the affective relationship and trust we have developed during the research. After more than ten years working pedagogically on E-learning courses, I can say that is fully possible to develop affective bonds in virtual courses - reflecting positively on student learning.

Final considerations

The prospect of teaching advocated by Davydov, according Libâneo (2004), parts from Vygotsky's idea of the role of education in the development of the intellectual potential of human beings. According to Libâneo (2004), students learn how to think theoretically about an object of study and thus, form an appropriate theoretical concept to that object in order to deal with it in practical situations.

From the findings, the research suggests that the Pedagogy Course poorly worked the concepts of Portuguese language and textual production; because of this, students felt motivated to work with these concepts; and those interventions were received positively by them; the writing problems present until the end of the course could have been overcome with the appropriation of basic concepts of Portuguese and textual production applied to text production by the students. Adding my opinion to Sforni's (2004), who advocates that teacher training (Pedagogy courses) also involves the ability to think theoretically some teaching situations, and this is the teacher professional difference.

Duarte (1998) discusses the reasons that would lead educators to devalue (or eventually to neglect) something that constitutes the specificity of human activity before the animal behavior: the transmission of knowledge. Luria (1985, 1992) stated that the vast majority of our knowledge comes from the transmission of accumulated historical experience. If so, asks Duarte (1998), to the pedagogical practice should we reject such transmission, or have it as a smaller goal? According to Duarte (1998), it has become a taboo in the Brazilian Education area to propose such transmission. It is accepted, even that it may exist, since it is just a moment to achieve the most desirable, the learning by itself.

What should be questioned is the pure mechanical transmission. By emphasizing the importance of working with concepts, it is not intended to promote teaching based on the mere transmission of knowledge, but to highlight the importance of working with scientific concepts, with emphasis on Portuguese language and textual production - especially regarding the formation of teachers (Pedagogy courses) - and the benefits in terms of intellectual development that the act of writing is able to provide. It is hoped that the findings mentioned here can contribute to the debate on implications of the teaching and learning of writing in formal education in Brazil: highlighting its importance from the creation of strategies to overcome the worrisome current situation, in terms of mastery of writing by Brazilian students, including the higher education ones.

The fact that the pedagogical interventions were carried out throughout real education activities contributed to its success, since the motivation of academic achievement in the tasks and the meaning that these activities posed to them. Obviously, the quality of the three students' writing evolution is not connected only to the interventions throughout this research. But it is possible to state that the pedagogical interventions were important to the evolutionary process of the researched students' writing, considering all the above mentioned aspects.

However, it is essential to promote a constructive dialogue between elementary education and higher education. Both have their contribution to the teaching of writing: the elementary education that teaches students to read and write and provides the foundation for the practice of writing and the university that graduates teachers who will work in elementary education.

A person with difficulties in writing, with help, with interventions of a more experienced person can overcome his difficulties and become a good writer, perhaps, a great writer. In the educational context, those most suitable for this than the teacher?

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CHAPTER 11

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN INTERAGENCY WORKPLACES

Harry Daniels

Introduction

Inter-professional collaborations for the wellbeing of children, and the ensuing adaptations being made by English local government authorities, were at the core of the four-year Learning in and for Interagency Working (LIW) study. Interagency working is an emergent and poorly understood form of work. It carries with it new demands for the conceptualisation of learning, preparation for practice and worker identity. This chapter will explore the wider theoretical implications of the LIW study for the development of theoretical understandings of interagency working. These are briefly discussed below:

This study examined inter-professional working as it was being developed to identify (i) what practitioners, such as social workers, psychologists, health workers, teachers, police etc. needed to know and be able to do in order to work across professional boundaries for children's wellbeing, and (ii) how their organisations were adapting. It found that operational practices were racing ahead of the strategic level practices which shaped the conditions of operational work, with the result that practitioners were rule-bending in their organisations to collaborate in responsive work with vulnerable children. Rule-bending was taken as a sign that organisations were not keeping pace with the demands of practices, in line with Barley and Kunda's (2001) observation that when the nature of work changes, organisational structures either adapt or risk becoming misaligned with the activities they organize.

The study focused on the sites of intersecting professional practices in multi-professional teams or local networks of expertise to reveal the additional 'collective competence' or 'common knowledge' (Carlile, 2004) which enabled practitioners to work collaboratively and responsively on the complex problem of children's vulnerability. The common knowledge they developed underpinned a new practice of boundary work and combined knowledge about work on wellbeing, for example, what practitioners wanted for children and what each could contribute to that aim, with a relational form of expertise which included 'knowing how to know who' and 'taking a pedagogic stance at work'.

In this chapter, I will introduce the underlying arguments and justifications for using a Developmental Work Research (DWR) methodology in the study of interagency working and then proceed to discuss the findings and the development of novel methods of analysis which were developed to investigate the sequential and contingent ideas of innovations as professionals attempted to work together.

I will present an account of an approach to the analysis of data collected over an extended period of time as professionals, who provide services for children, participated in a series of workshops in which they discuss data which mirrors their professional action and try to bring about change in their own institutional settings which themselves have been subject to radical change. The data trace the emergence of new ideas which were formed as tools with which individuals and groups may act to change their professional work practices as the demands of such work change.

In order to establish the context in which these data were gathered and analysed I will summarise a recent report of an investigation of the relationship between human functioning and the social relations of institutional settings (Daniels, 2010). The project[1] was concerned with the learning of professionals in the creation of new forms of practice which provide joined- up solutions to complex and diverse client needs. Working with other professionals involves engaging with many configurations of diverse social practices. It also requires the development of new forms of hybrid practice. The call for 'joined up' responses from professionals places emphasis on the need for new, qualitatively different forms of multiagency practice, in which providers operate across traditional service and team boundaries.

Understanding inter-agency work

This was a study which examined the challenges involved in doing what Victor and Boynton (1998) describe as *co-configuration* work. In the context of professional collaboration for social inclusion, co-configuration involves an on-going partnership between professionals and service users to support young people's pathways out of social exclusion. This work demands capacity to recognize and access expertise distributed across local systems and negotiate the boundaries of responsible professional action with other professionals and with clients. These are the key features of multiagency working which focused our attention.

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[1]   TLRP-ESRC study ESRC RES-139-25-0100 'Learning in and for Interagency Working' was co-directed by Harry Daniels and Anne Edwards. The research team included Paul Warmington, Deirdre Martin, Jane Leadbetter, David Middleton, and Steve Brown.

One of the project aims was to investigate the mutual shaping of human action and institutional settings. In order to fulfil this aim the project required theoretical tools which would generate a methodology (design) and methods that facilitated the examination reciprocal transformation of institutional structure and individual agency. In Daniels (2010) an account was developed of institutional structures as cultural historical products (i.e. artefacts) which play a part in the implicit (Werstch, 2007) or invisible (Bernstein, 2000) mediation of human functioning which are, in turn, transformed through human action. Invisible semiotic mediation is concerned with the ways in which unself-conscious everyday discourse mediates mental dispositions, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways and how it puts in place beliefs about the world one lives in, including both about phenomena that are supposedly in nature and those which are said to be in our culture (Hasan, 2002). Invisible semiotic mediation occurs in discourse embedded in everyday ordinary activities of a social subject's life. It is not just a matter of the structuring of interactions between the participants and other cultural tools; rather it is that the institutional structures themselves are cultural products which serve as mediators. When we talk in institutions, history enters the flow of communication through the invisible or implicit mediation of the institutional structures (Makitalo and Saljo, 2002). In the context of the research reported here we were interested in the meditational effects of different modalities of organisational structure in Children's Services on the actions of professionals in those services. Conversely, we were also interested in the ways in which these same professionals learned to act in new ways and, in so doing, brought about change in the institutions in which they worked. This research focus demands an appropriate theoretical stance on the challenge of macro-micro relations which can gain access to data on the processes of invisible semiotic mediation which are in play in rapidly changing workplaces.

Post Vygotskian theory which attempts to account for the social formation of mind mediated by artefacts, understood as cultural historical products, and Bernsteinian sociological theory (e.g. Bernstein, 2000) which seeks to forge analytical linkages between structure, communication and consciousness were both deployed (see Daniels, 2010 for details). Both approaches attempt to theorize and provide methodological tools for investigating the processes by which social, cultural, and historical factors shape human functioning. Neither account resorts to determinism in that they both acknowledge that in the course of their own development human beings also actively shape the very forces that are active in shaping them. This mediational model which entails the mutual influence of individual and supra-individual factors lies at the heart of many attempts to develop our understanding of the possibilities for interventions in processes of human learning and development.The theoretical move attempted in the work reported here was to show how Bernstein (2000) provides a language of description which allows Vygotsky's (1987) account of social formation of mind to be

extended and enhanced through an understanding of the sociological processes which form specific modalities of pedagogic practice and their specialized scientific concepts. The two approaches engage with a common theme namely the social shaping of consciousness, from different perspectives and yet as Bernstein (1993) acknowledges both develop many of their core assumptions from the work of Marx and the French school of early twentieth century sociology. As I have noted elsewhere, much of the sociocultural and its near neighbour, activity theory, research that claims a Vygotskian root fails to fully articulate an appropriate theory of social structure and an account of how it directs and deflects the attention of the individuals it constrains and enables (Daniels, 2008; 2001).

Vygotsky was concerned to study human functioning as it developed rather than considering functions that had developed. The essence of his 'dual stimulation' method is that subjects are placed in a situation in which a problem is identified and they are also provided with tools with which to solve the problem or means by which they can construct tools to solve the problem. When applied to the study of professional learning, it directs attention to the ways in which professionals solve problems with the aid of tools that may be in circulation in their workplace or may be provided by interventionist researchers.

Engeström (1999) sees joint activity or practice as the unit of analysis for activity theory, not individual activity. He is interested in the process of social transformation and includes the structure of the social world in analysis, taking into account the conflictual nature of social practice. He sees instability, (i.e. internal tensions) and contradiction as the 'motive force of change and development' (Engeström, 1999, p.9) and the transitions and reorganizations within and between activity systems as part of evolution. Yet, it is not only the subject, but the environment, that is modified through mediated activity. He views the 'reflective appropriation of advanced models and tools' as 'ways out of internal contradictions' that result in new activity systems (Cole and Engeström, 1993, p.40).

As we noted in Daniels and Warmington (2007), Engeström (1999) has explained the genealogy of his conceptual tools by outlining the development of three generations of activity theory. This development may be viewed as a process whereby the account given of the setting of development (Vygotsky, 1987) is progressively finessed. It starts from a view of mediation abstracted from context and then moves to the modelling of a single activity in a setting which is articulated in terms of rules, community and the division of labour. The third generation posits networks of activities and this is currently being developed to take account of some of the complexities of the boundaries that are created and transgressed between multiple activities in practice.

The first generation of activity theory drew heavily upon Vygotsky's concept of mediation. Vygotsky, in turn, predicated his notion of mediation upon Marx's (1976)

transhistorical concept of labour (or 'activity'), which states that: "The simple elements of the labour processes are (i) purposeful activity, that is work itself, (ii) the object on which that work is performed, and (iii) the instruments of that work" (Marx, 1976, p. 284).

Engeström's (1999) second generation of activity theory refers to the work of Leontiev (1978). Here, Engeström (1999) advocates the study of tools or artefacts 'as integral and inseparable components of human functioning' and argues that the focus of the study of mediation should be on its relationship with the other components of an activity system. The now very familiar depiction of an activity system as developed by Engestrom (1987) is shown in Figure 1 below:
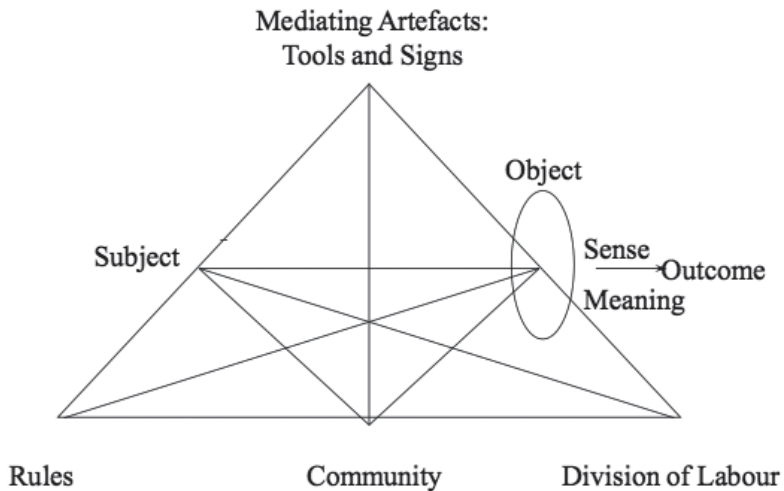

Figure 1: The structure of a human activity system (Engestrom, 1987, p. 78).

Figure 1 represents the social/collective elements in an activity system, through the elements of community, rules and division of labour while emphasising the importance of analysing their interactions with each other. The object is depicted with the help of an oval indicating that object-oriented actions are always, explicitly or implicitly, characterized by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making, and potential for change (Engeström, 1999).

The focus of the research has been on 'learning in practice' among education, social care and health professionals working within 'multiagency' children's services (Leadbetter et al., 2007). In each local authority our research methodology has been organised around series of 'developmental work research' workshops. In these workshops researchers have worked with children's services professionals to analyse

the development of current knowledge and practices and, by identifying existing tensions and contradictions, to point towards new practices that might support the development of new forms of multiagency working. The aim of the project is to try to explain what and how professionals learn in multiagency settings across education, health and social services. That is, how does multiagency working change the practices and perceptions of services professionals? What tools, contexts and values support or challenge the development of 'joined-up' working?

When we asked participants in our research what they are 'working on' the answers we receive are complex, diverse and often contradictory. Engeström (1987; 2001) emphasised the importance of contradictions within activity systems as the driving force of change and development. For instance, we identified numerous instances in which the efforts of different professional groups (such as teachers, educational psychologists, health workers, social care staff) to work on a shared object (such as the well-being of at-risk young people) have been shaped by the contradictions that emerge from having to work to different professional targets, referral thresholds and assessment procedures (that is, conflicting sets of rules).

Recent developments have witnessed increased emphasis on the multi-voicedness of activity systems and the way in which individual actors bring in their own histories from the social positions that they take up in the division of labour that obtains within the activity. Following in the Vygotskian 'genetic' tradition, a historical developmental analysis of activity is adopted in which contradictions are thought of as sources of change and development. Engeström sees the construction and redefinition of the object, as related to the 'creative potential' of activity (Engeström, 1999, p. 381). He maintains that it is important to extend beyond the singular activity system and to examine and work towards transformation of networks of activity. To this end, he sees potential in the exploration by some activity theorists of 'concepts of boundary object, translation, and boundary crossing to analyze the unfolding of object-oriented cooperative activity of several actors, focusing on tools and means of construction of boundary objects in concrete work processes. ' (Engeström 1999 p.7). The third generation of activity theory outlined in Engeström (1999) takes *joint activity* or practice as the unit of analysis for activity theory, rather than individual activity.

Engeström's (1999) analysis is concerned with the process of social transformation and incorporates the structure of the social world, with particular emphasis upon the *conflictual* nature of social practice. Instability and contradictions are regarded as the 'motive force of change and development' (Engeström, 1999) and the transitions and reorganizations within and between activity systems as part of evolution. The third generation of activity theory aims to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogues, multiple perspectives and networks of interacting activity systems, such as in interprofessional and inter- agency ways of working.
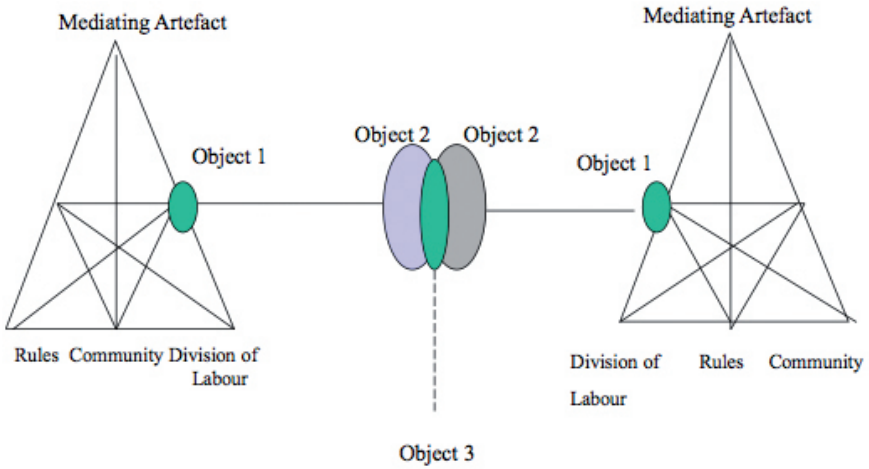
Figure 2: Two interacting activity systems after Engestrom (1999).

The minimal representation that Figure 2 provides shows two of what may be myriad systems exhibiting patterns of contradiction and tension.

> Third-generation activity theory endorses the fact that all activity systems are part of a network of activity systems that in its totality constitutes human society. Diverse activity systems are the result of a continuous historical process of progressive job diversification and collective division of labor at the societal level (Marx, 1867/1976). Thus, during societal development,.....; the network is formed as activity systems lose their self-containment and exchange entities, including objects, means of productions, people, and various forms of texts. The first activity system is understood as a concrete universal, which particularizes itself into many mutually constitutive activity systems (Roth and Lee, 2007, p. 201).

Collaboration between agencies is easily understood as the interaction, relations and mutual interdependency involved in the shared field of the prevention of social exclusion. But without the notion of the object, the collaboration easily remains a loose and ambiguous concept. Such a notion enables us to grasp the multiorganizational field of divergent agencies by following who takes part in the object construction. Those involved in the same activity can be recognized by following the object. This requires an object-orientated analysis of human activity; that is, its starting point is a desire to understand what it is that individuals (or organisations) are seeking to change or to shift. In the course of work in local authorities, therefore, we have asked different groups of professionals to explain what it is that they are 'working on'. When we ask this kind of question we are not

just concerned with the broad outcomes that professionals want to achieve, such as, for instance, improving referral systems; we want to encourage professionals to explain the exact practices that they think they will have to transform in order to improve referral processes. It might be, for example, that they are trying to find a way to ensure that a child and family only have to complete one assessment form, rather than a series of forms. In this case the transformation of the assessment form process becomes the *object* of the activity; the various children's services professionals carrying out the activity are the *subjects*; their *tools* are the means by which they work on improving assessment forms (this could be anything from a new electronic entry system to the appointment of a key worker/ case co-coordinator to a new diary system or any other 'tool').

Expansive learning

In many theories of learning, the learner or learners acquires some identifiable knowledge or skills in such a way that a corresponding, relatively lasting change in the behaviour of the subject or subjects may be observed. It is assumed that the knowledge or skill to be acquired is itself stable and open to reasonably unambiguous definition and articulation. The assumption is that in the practice of learning there is a teacher who knows what has to be learned. The situation we are studying is one in which subjects are learning something that is not known. The knowledge that has to learned is being learned as it is being developed. Therefore there is no-one in the role of teacher. In the original formulation of expansive learning, Engeström (1987) acknowledges the importance of this form of learning and draws on Bateson's (1972) formulation of levels of learning. Down (2004) provides a summary of Bateson's levels as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Bateson's levels of learning (http://www.cade-aced.ca/icdepapers/down.htm).

	Description	Example
level I	conditioning through the acquisition of responses deemed correct within a given context	learning the correct answers and behaviours in a classroom
level II	acquisition of the deep-seated rules and patterns of behavior characteristic to the context itself	learning the "hidden" curriculum of what it means to be a student
level III	radical questioning of the sense and meaning of the context and the construction of a wider alternative context	learning leading to change in organizational practices

Level 1 is the explicit focus of much education involving common notions of `learning' as cognitive, conative and affective - changes in knowledge, skills and attitude. Level 2 is about *learning the pattern of the context* in which activity takes place. The context indicates the meaning to be given to behaviour; there is change in *the way events are punctuated*. This also introduces a reflexive aspect to learning. Engestrom draws attention to Learning III. He argues that this form of learning involves reformulation of problems and the creation of new tools for engaging with these problems. This ongoing production of new problem solving tools enables subjects to transform the entire activity system, and potentially create, or transform and expand, the objects of the activity (Engeström, 1987, p. 158-159).

Expansive learning and enhanced professional practice occurs in activity settings which enable expansion of the object of activity. Expansive learning involves the creation of new knowledge and new practices for a newly emerging activity; that is, learning embedded in and constitutive of qualitative transformation of the entire activity system. Such a transformation may be triggered by the introduction of a new technology or set of regulations, but it is not reducible to it. This type of learning may be seen as distinct from that which takes place when: i) existing knowledge and skills embedded in an established activity are gradually acquired and internalised as in apprenticeship settings or ii) when existing knowledge is deployed in new activity settings, or iii) even when the new knowledge is constructed through experimentation within an established activity. All three of these types of learning may take place within expansive learning, but these gain a different meaning, motive and perspective as parts of the expansive process. A full cycle of expansive transformation may be understood as a collective journey through the zone of proximal development of the activity (Engeström, 1999). His argument is that expansive learning involves the creation of new knowledge and new practices for a newly emerging activity: that is, learning embedded in and constitutive of qualitative transformation of the entire activity system. Such a transformation may be triggered by the introduction of a new technology or set of regulations but it is not reducible to it. This type of learning may be seen as distinct from that which takes place when existing knowledge and skills embedded in an established activity are gradually acquired and internalized, as in apprenticeship models, or when existing knowledge is deployed in new activity settings or even when the new knowledge is constructed through experimentation within an established activity. All three types of learning may take place within expansive learning but these gain a different meaning, motive and perspective as parts of the expansive process.

The third generation of activity theory, as proposed by Engeström, intends to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogues, multiple perspectives and networks of interacting activity systems. He draws on Bahktin's (1986; 1984; 1981) ideas on dialogicality and multivoicedness in order to move beyond the limitations of the second

generation of activity theory, which was concerned with the analysis of single activity systems. The idea of networks of activity within which contradictions and struggles take place in the definition of the motives and object of the activity calls for an analysis of power and control within developing activity systems.

We identified the considerable resistance to change that may arise when professionals have understood that they should make changes in practice and organization but cannot yet engage with the processes of making changes (Daniels *et al.*, 2007). Our thinking was influenced by Vasilyuk (1991), who discussed such examples of inner resistance and subsequent actions whereby 'a person overcomes and conquers a crisis, restores lost spiritual equilibrium and resurrects the lost meaning of existence' (Vasilyuk, 1991, p. 10). This work directs attention to the affective dimensions of change which are too often under-theorised in studies of the development of new forms of professional practice. In Engestrom's (2007) latest interventionist research he has noted that whilst individual practitioners were happy to construct new models and tools for changing their work, they appeared reluctant to proceed with implementation. This resistance to the construction of new professional identities presents a challenge to the overly cognitive orientation of much Activity Theory based research. In the last year of his life, Vygotsky turned his attention to a new unit of analysis, namely, *perezhivanie*. This concept may be equated with 'lived or emotional experience'; it is a concept that helps to unpack the emotional dimensions of professional identity and practice in settings such as those we have encountered in local authority sites, wherein new forms of multiagency working and new configurations of professional expertise are emerging (Daniels *et al.*, 2007).

Boundary objects, translation, and boundary crossing

Engeström (2000) also argues that it is important to extend beyond the singular activity system and to examine and work towards the transformation of networks of activity. He advocates the exploration of concept of boundary crossing to analyze the unfolding of object-oriented cooperative activity of several actors, focusing on tools and means of construction of boundary objects in concrete work processes.' (Engeström, 1999, p. 391) The concept of boundary-crossing offers a potential means of conceptualizing the ways in which collaboration between workers from different professional backgrounds might generate new professional practices (Engeström and Kerosuo, 2003; Engestrom et al., 1995). Standard notions of professional expertise imply a vertical model, in which practitioners develop competence over time as they acquire new levels of professional knowledge, graduating 'upwards' level by level in their own specialisms. By contrast, boundary-crossing suggests that expertise is also developed

when practitioners collaborate *horizontally* across sectors, thereby providing a basis that might be useful for explicating into agency and interprofessional work. In particular, Engeström, Engeström, and Vahaaho (1999) developed the concept of knotworking to describe the "construction of constantly changing combinations of people and artefacts over lengthy trajectories of time and widely distributed in space" (p. 345). They described knotworking as follows:

> Knotworking is characterized by a pulsating movement of tying, untying and retying together otherwise separate threads of activity. The tying and dissolution of a knot of collaborative work is not reducible to any specific individual or fixed organizational entity as the center of control. The center does not hold. The locus of initiative changes from moment to moment within a knotworking sequence. Thus, knotworking cannot be adequately analyzed from the point of view of an assumed center of coordination and control, or as an additive sum of the separate perspectives of individuals or institutions contributing to it. The unstable knot itself needs to be made the focus of analysis. (Engeström et al.,1999, p. 346–347).

They pointed out the difference between knotworking which operates at the individual and collective levels. Thus "intersubjectivity is not reducible to either the *inter*action between or the *subjectivity* of each participant both are needed" (Engeström et al.,1999, p. 354). Boundary zones allow practitioners to express multiple alternatives, challenge the concepts that are declared from above by using their own experienced concepts, and through these debates create a new negotiated model of activity (Engeström, Pasanen, Toiviainen & Haavisto, 2005). In this respect, expansive learning is dialogical; it helps to tie knots between different activity systems and find a common perspective by moving sideways using the existing knowledge and practitioners' experiences, as well as their visions for the future (Engeström, 2004). Taken together the concepts of boundary crossing and knotworking are attempts to theorize the actions that place as networks of activity are transformed.

Among the multiagency groups involved in the project the development of, what we called 'knowing who' trails has been a key element of effective multiagency working. This entails the building of knowledge about the kinds of skills and expertise other professionals can offer and a confident understanding of how to access others' expertise. In workshops practitioners questioned the extent to which these trails work informally or need to be formalized through tools such as meetings, referral processes and information sharing databases. However, accessing distributed expertise is also dependent on professionals understanding the rules within which other professionals' practices are embedded. Contradictions emerge in multiagency activities because of contrasting professional values and also because different professionals may work

to divergent targets, statutory guidelines and thresholds of concern. Therefore, boundary-crossing is predicated not only on knowledge of what other professionals do but *why* they operate as they do. Thus there is a need to focus on the ways in which professional knowledge, relationships and identities incorporate learning 'who', 'how', 'what', 'why' and 'when'. Moreover, it is important to explore the dynamic, relational ways in which professional learning and professional practice unfold. This means asking *with* whom practices are developed, where current practices lead *to,* where practices have emerged *from* and *around* what activities and processes new practices emerge. These are concerns which recognize that professional learning in and for multiagency working is embedded in fluid social and cultural contexts.

Cognitive trails

Engestrom has also drawn on Cussins' (1992) theory of cognitive trails which he and Kerosuo suggest serve as anchors and stabilizing networks that make divided activity networks and their multi-organizational terrains knowable and livable (Engeström, & Kerosuo, 2007). Cognitive trails are constantly created and recreated in the flow of person's experiences (Engeström, 2006). They are a form of embodied cognition created as people move through space and time.

> Trails are both person-made and world-made, and what makes persons and worlds. Trails are in the environment, certainly, but they are also *cognitive* objects. A trail isn't just an indentation in a physical surface, but a *marking* of the environment; a signposting for coordinating sensation and movement, an experiential line of force. Hence the marking is both experiential and environmental (Cussins, 1992, p. 673-674).

Cognitive trails 'mark' the landscape in which people have acted and they act as a means of support for future action. Although it is not an entirely correct analogy when I was first trying to understand this concept I thought about 'Songlines' or dreaming tracks described in the novel by Bruce Chatwin (1987) which are remembrances which support navigation through what might ostensibly be seen as a featureless landscape in rural Australia. Cussins description emphasizes the way in which, once created, cognitive trails functions as guides for future action.

> Each trail occurs over time, and is a manipulation or a trial or an avoidance or capture or simply a movement. It is entirely context-dependent... Yet a trail is not transitory (although a tracking of a trail is): the environmental marking persists and thereby the ability to navigate through the feature-domain is enhanced (Cussins, 1992, p. 674).

These inscriptions facilitate development of new forms of action in the relative unknown territory that is developed when boundaries as crossed. In Engeström (2006) he extends this notion when he deploys the metaphor of mycorrhizae, the invisible subterranean structure of fungus, to describe the emergence and functioning of knotworking. Once developed, mycorrhizae can lie dormant for lengthy periods, but is able to grow mushrooms, i.e. unite successfully heterogeneous partners in order to work together symbiotically, when the conditions are right (Engeström, 2006). Similarly, cognitive trails required for knotworking may stay unused for periods, but become re-activated by different innovatively collaborating and improvising actors when new contradictions and new learning challenges for the activity system occur. The subterranean structure has a meaning only in relation to the plants it grows, but the growing of plants (i.e. transformation of activity systems) cannot be understood without taking into account the mycorrhizae-like base (Märtsin, 2007). It is through this kind of metaphorical discussion that Engestrom seeks to theorise and understand what might be happening when subjects cross the boundaries that are created in complex activity system networks as they seek to develop and promote new ways of working and being. Research that focuses on networks of interacting activity systems and multi-organizational fields of activity (including research framed within "third generation" activity theory) is, located within the distal dynamics of emergent forms of work, training and learning in practice. Of critical importance within this area of research is the refinement of the collective aspect of labour-power. This encompasses the ways in which groups and networks are organized, managed, scripted and distributed, the configuration of rules and division of labour. These concerns are apparent in, for instance, Engestrom's (2004) appropriation of Victor and Boynton's (1998) notion of "co-configuration" in contemporary work settings and his development of the concept of "knotworking" (Engestrom et al., 1999). The increasing importance of multi-organizational fields of activity as objects of research and policy is an expression of the reliance of contemporary capitalism upon intelligent, collaborative organization of collective labour-power. In the UK this is evident, for example, in social policy's persistent demands for more effective "interagency" working in a range of fields.

Labour Power

In Daniels and Warmington (2007) we suggested that cognitive trails, knotworking and boundary crossing could be regarded as tools for reconfiguring collective labour power, such as in interprofessional or interagency work. We argue that the notion of labour power may also prove to be a useful addition to the activity theory model of the 'setting of development' with specific reference to the notion of 'subject'.

The categories of use - and exchange - value that Engeström (2001, p. 137) identifies as 'the primary contradiction of activities in capitalism' derive from Marx's depiction of commodification. In offering explanation of the internal relationship between use- and exchange-value, Engeström customarily invokes Leont'ev's example of a medical practitioner's work. However, this example of a commodity is only partly helpful, since Marx, in *Capital* (Marx, 1976) and its precursor, *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1973), posits *two* categories of commodity: the 'general class of commodities', of which Leont'ev's medicines is an example and the 'other great class of commodity', which he terms *labour-power*. The latter is described as a potential force: a resource residing in the subject (and in the subject's tool appropriation). It includes an array of qualities: not just skills and knowledge forms but also attitudes, motivation and self-presentation. The definition of 'labour-power' might include the potential or the disposition to form those inter-subjective resources such as 'cognitive trails', 'confidence pathways', 'trust cohorts' (Cussins, 1992; Knorr-Cetina, 1999).

Education, training and work-related learning are forms of social production of labour-power potential. This was the case in the interagency settings that we examined, wherein the activation of labour-power is directed by the demand to innovate forms of co-operation between labour-powers. The consequences for the organization and management of collective labour-power in both private and public sectors include the emergence of radically distributed "collectivity" and increasing emphasis upon adherence to "flexible" and "improvisational" work patterning.

This has implications for the practical application of activity theory in work-related research, since it suggests that, above and beyond the specific, directly functional object of a particular activity (the realization of specific workplace projects), the 'meta-object' of a workplace activity system is the expansion of labour-power potential (Warmington, 2005). The development of Vygotsky's activity theory in the subsequent work of Leont'ev and Engeström is rooted in a concern with the *collective* aspect of labour-power. Engeström's notion of expansive learning (in work settings) and his analytic focus on the second and third generations of activity theory implies the meta-object of working on the quality of labour-power: in particular, the quality of co-operation between labour-powers within activity systems ('second generation') and between related activity systems ('third generation').

Object-orientated activity is rendered contradictory because it constitutes both directly functional work and the social production of labour-power, which is always riven by contradictions. These contradictions are experienced by the subject (with its inhabiting labour-power), as the subject negotiates objects, rules, tools, communities and divisions of labour that are themselves contradictory (because they are elements of this double activity and expressions of labour in capitalism). Contradictions are generated because, within the labour process, the human is simultaneously marginal and central within the activity system: simultaneously actor and labour-power resource (cf. Roth *et al.*, 2005, p. 7).

Research interventions that apply activity theory in workplace learning studies are immersed in the contradictory double form of object-orientated activity systems: (1) the object of directly functional work and (2) the goal that is the social production of labour-power. Given this, it is unsurprising that Engeström (2001, p. 134) speaks of object-oriented actions as 'always, explicitly or implicitly, characterized by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making, and potential for change' and urges us to abandon the presupposition that knowledge and skills acquired in the workplace are 'stable and reasonably well defined' (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). For, insofar as the meta-object of an activity system is the social production of labour-power, it must be contradictory and, in potential, 'infinitely' expansive. These instabilities pervade the contemporary sphere of 'service industries', the 'knowledge economy', 'reflexivity' and 'learning organizations', wherein workplace activities are as much about the social production of the unstable and unfinished commodity of labour-power as they are about marshalling concrete labour to produce general commodities. We argued that contemporary forms of service work emphasise the importance of cognitive trails, knotworking and boundary crossing as tools for reconfiguring collective labour power. All of these tools, which support interaction between activity systems, are predicated upon shifts towards weakly bounded professional categories that will allow practitioners to negotiate shared objects, tools and rules and to draw upon distributed expertise. The work of the project suggests the importance of organizational climates in which boundary-crossing is facilitated. Boundary-crossing and an emphasis on generic professional skills creates tensions within the strongly bounded professional categories that evolved in traditional modes of mass production and mass customization. We encountered a persistent concern among professionals about "how to be" a multiagency worker in practice. "Multiagency" professionals are required to develop the potential to undertake an expanded range of tasks and roles. Thus in current work forms professional categories appear fluid and weakly bounded; however, control is stronger. In short, the multiagency professionals' repertoire sets broad limits on "potential" professional positioning but the "actualization" of labour power is predicated upon tight control over dispositional messages (that is, professionals are directed towards appropriate forms of interaction and collective object-orientation).

As stated above, central to activity theory's analysis of learning in practice is the notion of 'expansive learning' among both professionals and service users: the capacity to interpret and expand the definition of the object of activity and respond in increasingly enriched ways, thus producing culturally new patterns of activity that expand understanding and change practice. Activity theory derived analyses of interagency working are 'post-bureaucratic', in that they move beyond simply offering systemic prescriptions for managing collaboration, but also avoid focusing exclusively on actors and their discursive interactions. This approach is pertinent to the radically

distributed forms of 'joined up' working intended to counter social exclusion, wherein clients may encounter multiple agencies over extended periods. Temporally and spatially distributed work patterns are often depicted as a 'barrier' to effective interagency working, rather than a shift to a new form of work. It is still often implied that the conflicts generated by interagency working must be denied and that the ideal work form involves the coalescing of expertise into compact, consensual communities of practice. Activity theory literature emphasises the importance of focusing on the object of the activity system in collaborative, distributed work settings. The object serves as a centring and integrating device in complex, multi-voiced settings. However, specific tools for collaborative, interagency practice are lacking at an operational level. The emphasis placed upon consensual models of working in strategic and good practice may place constraints on expansive learning in practice and, in particular, tend to under-acknowledge the importance of the internal contradictions generated by activity systems as mechanisms for transforming practice. Consequently, Engestrom *et al.* (1997) stress the importance of developing tools 'for disagreement'. Interagency collaboration involves the distribution of responsibilities and tasks; vertical and horizontal tools are required to support and facilitate this mode of working. Existing tools, designed for intra-organisational practice may not suffice. Engeström emphasises the special importance of 'future-orientated' tools: artifacts that do not merely address the immediate needs of an activity system but which suggest to practitioner-subjects means by which to expand learning and practice. In order to both facilitate and understand this kind of development Engestrom devised an interventionist methodology.

Developmental Work Research

Much of Engeström's work involves developmental intervention based research. He argues that research has a dialectical, dialogic relationship with activity and he focuses on contradictions as causative and disturbances as indicators of potential. He sees interventions as enabling the construction of new instrumentalities, and bringing about through externalisation the 'transformative construction of new instruments and forms of activity at collective and individual levels' (Engeström, 1999, p.11.)

In this way Engeström studies transformations in work and organizations, combining micro level analysis of discourse and interaction with historical analysis and the macro modelling of organizations as activity systems working through developmental contradictions. CHAT underpinned the Developmental Work Research (DWR) sessions that provided the main data source for our examination of conceptual change. DWR is used to help practitioners reveal understandings that are embedded in their accounts of their practices and the systemic tensions and contradictions they encountered when developing new ways of working. In DWR, 'second series stimuli' are used with the

participants to achieve this. In DWR sessions, these stimuli are the conceptual tools of activity theory. The research team shared these conceptual tools with the practitioners to enable them to analyse and make sense of their everyday practices, the things that they were working on and trying to change during those practices and the organisational features that shaped them. In the sessions, evidence of the practices of the participants, gathered in previous interviews, workshops or compiled with practitioners as case study examples, was presented by the facilitators. As they worked on the evidence using activity theory, practitioners revealed the conceptual tools they were using as they engaged in or hoped to develop their work. This methodology enabled the research team to see what practitioners were learning in order to undertake inter-professional collaborations, and what adjustments they were making to existing practices and their own positions as professionals within those practices.

- In our work we also drew on a model of cultural transmission in order to nuance the micro – macro relation within the CHAT based approach. The British sociologist, Basil Bernstein (1993) argued that the enrichment of Vygotskian theory calls for the development of languages of description which will facilitate a *multi-level* understanding of discourse, the varieties of its practice and contexts of its realization and production. Bernstein's (2000) general model is one that is designed to relate macro-institutional forms to micro-interactional levels and the underlying rules of communicative competence. This is something that CHAT struggles to achieve. Bernstein focuses upon two levels; a structural level and an interactional level. The structural level is analyzed in terms of the social division of labour it creates (e.g. the degree of specialization, and thus strength of boundary between professional groupings) and the interactional with the form of social relation it creates (e.g. the degree of control that a manager may exert over a team members' work plan). The social division is analyzed in terms of strength of the boundary of its divisions, that is, with respect to the degree of specialization (e.g. how strong is the boundary between professions such as teaching and social work). Thus, the key concept at the structural level is the concept of boundary, and structures are distinguished in terms of their relations between categories. The interactional level emerges as the regulation of the transmission/acquisition relation between teacher and taught (or the manager and the managed), that is, the interactional level comes to refer to the pedagogic context and the social relations of the workplace or classroom or its equivalent. Bernstein's work has not placed particular emphasis on the study of change (see Bernstein 2000) and, thus, as it stands, has not been applied to the study of the cultural historical formation of specific forms of activity.

Analyses of interagency working that are rooted in activity theory define organizational learning as extending beyond the formation of collective routines (organizational forms, rules, procedures, conventions and strategies). However, outside of the activity theory derived literature on interagency working, organizational routines and forms remain the key research focus and there is little explicit emphasis upon tool creation or upon object-orientated analyses. The demands of interagency working exceed current conceptualization of work-related learning, in that standard concepts of learning in practice still often rely upon conventional notions of partnerships, teams, networks and communities of practice. In interagency/ co-configuration settings the emergent form of work is characterized by intensely collaborative activity but relies upon constantly changing combinations of people coalescing to undertake tasks of relatively brief duration. Consensus is not idealized and 'common' professional values are not prerequisites for effective collaboration. The notion of *boundary-crossing* also enables horizontal professional relationships to be conceived in terms of the spaces that they offer for renegotiation of interagency working practices and reconfiguration of professional identities. They allow effective interagency collaboration to encompass internal tensions as well as consensus.

As such, specific tools for collaborative, interagency practice are lacking at an operational level. Strategic literature and good practice models offer little in the way of conceptual tools to enable understanding of dialogue, multiple perspectives and networks of interacting activity systems. Outside of the activity theory derived literature, organizational routines and forms remain the key research focus and there is little explicit emphasis upon tool creation or upon object-orientated analyses. Conceptions of interagency working are often truncated because 'joined up' working tends to be equated with systemic reconfiguration and 'partnership' processes. The development of coherent models of interagency working is dependent upon systematic analysis of new forms of professional practice, framed by understanding of the historically changing character of organizational work and user engagement. With regard to emerging practices around interagency working to counter social exclusion, there is a pressing need to identify and conceptualize the key features of learning and practice in work settings in which a range of agencies and otherwise loosely connected professionals are required to collaborate with young people and their families to innovate develop forms of provision over extended periods of time.

It is for this reason that current developments in activity theory, which offer object-orientated analyses of complex, radically distributed work settings, suggest a framework for developing models of work-based professional learning that will enhance interagency collaboration among practitioners working across education, health, mental health, social services and criminal justice.

The Interventionist Methodology

In each of three local authorities our research interventions were organized around a sequence of six workshops involving operational staff and operational managers working in different areas of children's services. The workshops enabled the LIW research team to examine practitioners' 'everyday' interpretations of the professional learning emerging in the shift towards multiagency working and the organizational conditions that support such learning. Using activity theory as a shared analytical framework, the workshops were designed to support reflective systemic analysis by confronting 'everyday' understandings with critical analysis of the ways in which current working practices/ activities either enabled or constrained the development of innovative multiagency working.

In each workshop, analyses of professional learning in and for multiagency working were developed collaboratively between the research team and children's services professionals. These focused upon:

- **Present practice:** identifying structural tensions (or 'contradictions') in current working practices

- **Past practice:** encouraging professionals to consider the historical development of their working practices

- **Future practice:** working with professionals to suggest new forms of practice that might effectively support innovations in multiagency working.

The aim of the workshops was to address the challenges of multiagency professional learning by encouraging the recognition of areas in which there is a need for change in working practices and suggesting possibilities for change through re-conceptualizing the 'objects' that professionals are working on, the 'tools' that professionals use in their multiagency work and the 'rules' in which professional practices are embedded.

The workshops were conducted over a period of twelve months at intervals of around six weeks. Each session ran for two hours and was, on most occasions, conducted by a team of four or five researchers. Sessions were organized around the presentation of 'mirror data': that is, data derived from analysis of individual interviews with staff and from previous workshops. Professionals and researchers discussed the mirror data, using activity theory as an analytical framework with which to identify structural tensions (or 'contradictions') in their practice. The key elements of this analysis were: a historical analysis of the development of professional practices (i.e. how had current practice developed out of older ways of working, what changes might enable current practice to evolve) and identification of the constituent parts of present, past and future multiagency practice (what objects, rules, divisions of labour etc. did participants identify (Figure 3).
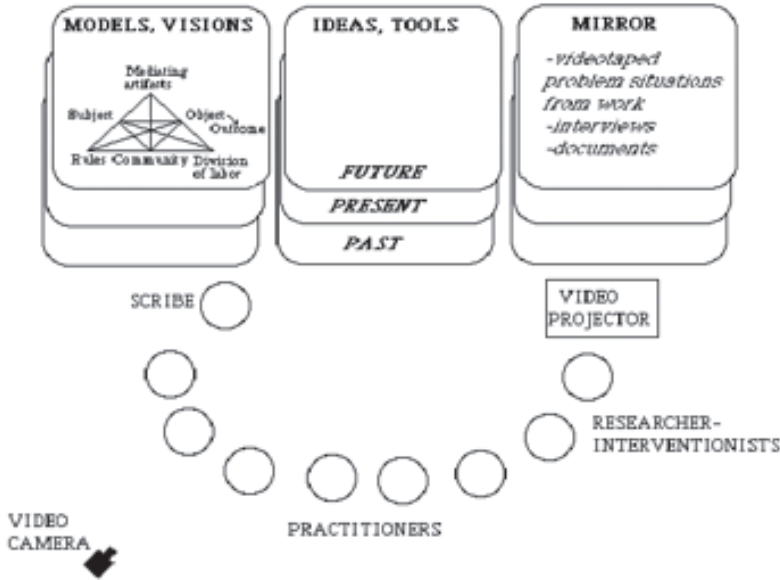
Figure 3

In this way, critical incidents and examples from the ethnographic material were brought into workshop sessions to stimulate analysis and negotiation between the participants. We found that this approach worked very well in inter-agency settings where a crucial precursor of learning and system development was that all participants understood and appreciated enough about the work of their colleagues when deciding how they should act in relation to others. The crucial element in a Vygotskian dual stimulation event is the co-occurrence of both the problem and tools with which to engage with that problem.

A Bernsteinian analysis revealed the boundaries where communicative action in each site was most engaged and how that action was regulated. In a situation where boundary crossing was required in the general drive for 'joined up' approaches we inferred that the weakest boundaries would be those that were most likely to be crossed and transformed. Analysis revealed how a focus on institutional boundaries and relations of control provided important tools for the understanding the shaping of transformative learning in specific settings.

This approach gives some insight into the shaping effect of institutions as well the ways in which they are transformed through the agency of participants. We modelled the structural relations of power and control in institutional settings, theorized as cultural historical artefacts, which invisibly or implicitly mediate the relations of participants in practices in which communicative action takes place. The Bernsteinian analysis was indicative of the points at which change was most likely to take place in specific institutional modalities as pressure for change was invoked from outside those settings.

Methods of Data Analysis

There were two approaches to the analysis of data. Firstly, a top down selective 'structural' analysis, using CHAT and cognate concepts to provide mirror data that would stimulate discussion of past, present and future work in the dual stimulation scenarios that constituted the workshops.

The second challenge was to develop an approach to the analysis of the audio visual recordings of the six two hour workshops that took place at each of three sites over one year with the practitioners who were working in multi- professional settings or were moving towards inter-professional work. The data were collected by three teams of researchers from 3 English Universities.

The rest of this paper will consist of a discussion[2] of the analysis of:

- Communicative accomplishment in the facilitation of the workshops:

- Accomplishment and organisation of participant contributions and emergent engagement

- The emergence of what it is to learn as an analytic object across the workshops

The general analytic frame involves a shift from the 'given' to the 'to-be-established'. These three concepts are now elaborated in the following sections.

Communicative accomplishment in the facilitation of the workshops:

This section shows how there were moments of translation in which devices of **recapping** (i.e. material from previous events as in the next example.

"So starting from the, the child. We touch on it at the meeting where Sean was here I think about how much the rhetoric of the child deciding who the invite letter goes to is actually happening, or whether all the other procedures take precedence - there's another area for development there." Such recapping is part of the building of the discursive context in terms of issues continuity across the sessions.), **reformulation** (i.e. A further device for building the interpretative context is to take and individual contribution that is voiced in the 1st person and reformulate in the second person as a collective summary of action that can be taken as common to others,.) and **re-footing** (i.e. a facilitator can provide a basis for changing who should currently be given the floor. The 'footing' (Goffman) of the interaction is then explicitly oriented to and changed

....E.g.) were deployed by workshop facilitators

While it might appear self evident that the practical organization of the workshops would have to be explained to participants, some representation of how this was accomplished is of interest. The workshops developed their own patterns and rhythms at each site. The workshops were introduced both in terms of the ground rules of participation and the continuing representation of the evolving content of the workshops at each site. Each workshop had extensive introductions setting out both the terms of reference and the selected aims for each session.

One device that was consistently used one of workshops by the facilitator was the 'pursuit of clarification'.

> **Workshop 1** - *So you've got continuity of staff staying for a long period of time and staying with the same areas as well. How does that- how does that reflect on other agencies?*

> **Workshop 2** - *Can I ask other people who may, they know about this new tool that's been trailed, is it, is it very recent from what you're saying?*

> **Workshop 3** - *If you, if you hadn't had that dual role there it would have been a different action and would it, if somebody else had got exclusion?*

These examples pick up on participant terms of reference and issues.

This approach to clarification tended to preceed clarification in terms of CHAT issues. The use of CHAT terms of reference (e.g. rules, contradiction, tools, object, division of labour and community) were introduced gradually into the discussions and there was a gradual move back and forth between these terms and 'everyday' forms of reference.

> **Workshop 3** - *And what sort of **rules** would you be trying to bend?*

> **Workshop 4** - *How much was there a, there was a **contradiction** between what the professionals thought was necessary and what the child wanted; how did you deal with that?*

Recapping and reformulation were significant features of the facilitation of the workshops. In the following example recapping of emergent issues and reformulation of the issue in terms of the opportunity it provides for communication is evident.

> **Workshop 5** - *So am I right, you've had the review which has given you opportunity to talk where you wouldn't; you've got an extra person in behavior support; you've got the agreement for a nurse, a designated nurse; you've got the reimplementation of new PEP responsibility, or reminder of.*

Another form of recapping involves taking material from previous workshops as in the next example.

Workshop 5 - *So starting from the, the child. We touch on it at the meeting (workshop) where XX was here I think about how much the rhetoric of the child deciding who the invite letter goes to is actually happening, or whether all the other procedures take precedence - there's another area for development there.*

Such recapping is part of the building of the discursive context in terms of issues continuity across the sessions. This is very similar to the sorts of analysis that can be done on classroom lessons across time (Edwards and Mercer, 1989).

A further device for building the interpretative context is to take and individual contribution that is voiced in the first person and reformulate in the second person as a collective summary of action that can be taken as common to others, as in the next example

Workshop 5 - *So you've got new- new children coming into the system and- and new workers coming into the system essentially?*

This example is interesting because if such a reformulation is not challenged in subsequent terms it becomes part of the default continuity of the sessions; a resource that can be referred to or taken as given.

In the workshops the facilitator can provide a basis for changing who should currently be given the floor. The 'footing' (Goffman, 1979) of the interaction is then explicitly oriented to and changed as in the next example where the facilitator acknowledges and directs collective attention to a contribution made by Y in a previous session.

Facilitator - *Well let's bring Health in on this triangle as well because there's that- I mean you've just painted the good sort of school and social worker [talking together]*

Education Officer - *Yeah, but kind of Health is another point on that triangle [talking together]*

Facilitator - *Yes, but I mean that- you, Y you said last time you started to raise some of the issues [inaudible ñ 00:17:55] thresholds.*

Goffman (1979) points out that there is no necessary alignment between the speaker and utterance. We can say things in ways that displaces the utterances so as to indicate that it is not necessarily what we would take to be the case. The Facilitator is doing more than directing participation in the workshop in the above example. In raising the issue of thresholds she aligns that topic with that of one of the participants, Y. This 'footing' of the topic in terms of the alignment of interests of a participant in contrast to it being directly aligned with the claimed interests of the facilitator provides a means for positioning the unfolding discussion as oriented to participant concerns and declared interests.

Accomplishment and organisation of participant contributions emergent engagement

Workshop events consisted of much more then the facilitator orchestrating the communicative action. They are also made up of emergent engagement of the attendees. What is of interest in this section is with the means that allows for their engaged participation. In the workshops emergent engagement was realized both in terms of local concerns formulated in terms of local vocabulary and issues. We also see the appropriation of the CHAT vocabulary in the formulation of issues. There is an interesting question here with respect to the efficacy of the workshops which might be witnessed in the extent to which it is possible to note a shift to CHAT theoretic discussion over the sessions. In other words have the CHAT 'tools' become part of the ways in which participants work on and make relevant their analysis of new ways of working.

It was also possible to examine the sorts of devices participants used in warranting their claims about their work. In terms of building up a consensus concerning contributions different forms of ratification were used, including: latched completions where turns are completed by another participant; the use of local systemic analysis; the use of CHAT terms; the deployment of what it is to be a professional – professional footing; and the production of summaries of previous contributions; the repositioning of the ongoing contributions (refooting) in CHAT terms; and the recruiting of others in terms of reported speech and terms. The key thing about all of the above is that they are realized in communicative action focused on emergent distinctions between 'what was', 'what is' and 'what could be'. Some examples are given below.

A defining property of participation in the one of the series of workshops was the capacity of participants to engage in local systemic analysis. The following exemplifies this in terms of benefits of boundary crossing.

> **WORKSHOP 1** - *Education Officer Well- sorry- I was going to say, in (Local Authority A) I think that's one of the advantages we do have is that Z is the teacher and we've planted him in Social Services and I'm a social worker planted in Education. So I'm able to advocate the Social Care needs of the young people as a social worker through the education systems. And Z is able to do that in terms of teaching in social work systems. And the other sort of little advantage we have is W was not only [unclear ñ 01:35:54] but a looked after' children's officer in District M when she came to Local Authority A. So there it's for me they're all like major bonuses that assist our system working more effectively. We've got along way to go but they have assisted.*

Emergent participation was also configured in terms of the use of CHAT to address systemic analysis of practice. There was evidence of increasing use of CHAT concepts in attendees, but not dense usage.

Use of Rules in Workshop 3 by an Educational Psychologist - *Well I think it's a systemic level, um you know I think we all to some extent rule bend on occasions. And part of, you know for myself now that I've been and EP for two years I'm beginning to see a little bit more now where it's okay to bend the rules and where it's less okay. But, and that's on an individual level. But I think at a systemic level where there's a lot of that happening we should be learning lessons from it and say, well we need to redefine the rules never mind about rule bend, you know we need to look at- so for example I think you know, we've raised the issues of um this, you know planning meetings and schools often not prioritizing or sometimes not prioritizing children who as an authority, share purpose including the children in public care we feel should be being prioritized. So therefore we may need to redefine our rules around how we allocate EP time. And as we've said before there's a pot of if there was a pot of time that we could allocate to almost rule bending the pot of time. But then the constraints that we're working in that are national constraints that it's difficult to recruit EPs. So then it's about prioritizing our rules in a sense.*

The emergence of what it is to learn as an analytic object across the workshops

In order to identify evidence trails of professional learning in multi-agency settings in this multi-site and multi-centred study over time a 'bottom-up' comprehensive analysis of audio-visual recordings of workshops was needed. David Middleton proposed an approach to analysis which focused on the forms of social action that are accomplished in talk and text and the sorts of communicative devices that are used (Middleton et al, 2008). This was termed the 'D-analysis'. It was designed to focus the analytic attention of the research team on emergent distinctions that were argued by participants. This involved the examination of the shift from the 'given' to the 'to-be-established'. 'What-it-is-to-do' or 'to learn' was not assumed to be an analytic 'a priori' (Middleton, 2004). Rather such issues are approached as participants' concerns or 'members categories' (Sacks, 1992; Edwards and Stokoe, 2004). This analytic shift aimed to move from framing communication as descriptions corresponding to states in and of the world, to the performative organization of communicative action. In other words, what we do with talk and text can be analyzed in terms of it accomplishes (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards and Potter; Edwards. 1992). We emphasized that addressing such issues required a focus on the sequential and contingent organization of session communicative action. That is, how people's contributions to the sessions are contingently related to each other in terms of the sequential organization of their talk (Middleton et al., 2008).

Its cyclical application enabled: reading, reviewing, interrogating, collating and comparing all the audio-visual evidence from the intervention sessions in order to identify the emergent strands of learning and proposals for change. The approach was developed as a means of identifying strands of communicative action which witnessed the sequential and contingent development of concepts over the course of the year in which the 6 workshops were organized at each site. In drawing analytical attention to the significance of claims to experience we were also able to highlight the temporal organization of communicative action. We also used forms of discursive analysis to trace the emergence of what can be taken as the collective and distributed knowledge of people who are charged with the task of working together. We aimed to track the emergence practical epistemologies (c.f. Wickman and Ostman, 2002) that come and need to be taken-as-given in order to take account of hitherto unaddressed gaps in the realization of multi-agency practice. Such gaps were identified and worked on through participation in the DWR sessions at each research site.

In the first instance we approached the data with what could be termed a minimal operationalization of what-it-is-to-learn from a participant's perspective. We examined the data for ways participants signaled some forms of awareness that theirs or others knowledge state is at issue. . Such 'noticing's' provide the resource that engages the participants in their definition, delineation, deliberation of the nature of the practices that make up their multi-disciplinary work. In the data we could identify many such strands of noting and noticing such distinctions that make the difference. Indeed this sort of analysis provided us with a basis for defining a protocol for guiding interrogation and analysis of the data in terms of the sequential organization of such strands. The analysis was therefore initially guided in terms of the following protocol:

> **Deixis:** - *identify when there is some nomination or 'pointing' to a particular issue in terms of drawing attention to a distinction that is then worked up to make a difference in subsequent turns. (e.g. It's interesting, it just makes me think of boundaries again. There's a sense in which although the child is the same child outside and inside we sort of feel that we can almost draw a boundary around the school and say when you're inside here all of that outside you can leave it at the gates or we can minimize the effects of... yeah... And I think, you know, perhaps we set ourselves a target which is almost unachievable, unattainable in that sense. Um, and perhaps the way in which schools with others needs to be bridging that boundary differently. Um but... and also resonated was um [unclear – 00:20:38] at city B where the teachers feeling was although a lot of the cause of under achievement and so on are... lie aside school. It's their responsibility to do something about it. And there's a terrible bind that I think teachers put themselves into um feeling responsible um for doing something about it. Um of course one hand tied behind your back.)*

Definition and delineation: *look for how that issue is elaborated in the uptake of others in terms of how the following are warranted and made relevant through: (i) qualifications identifying further distinctions; (ii) order abilities in the organization and delivery of past, present and future practice; (iii) expansive elaborations of the problematic of practice. (e.g. But I think one of the unspoken things is that to actually enable a child to do that, you have in some sense to deal with or help the child deal with the issues that the child carries with them, which are home based issues. Um, and whether you do that explicitly or implicitly, do a nurture approach or in just a school which is welcoming and nurturing and... however you do it I think you have to do it somehow. Because I think it's not impossible but incredibly difficult to expect a child to be able to come to a school, divest themselves of all the emotion, the baggage that they carry, leave it at the gates and come in and focus on the academic and...)*

Deliberation: *identify how some working consensus on what is the case emerges in terms of evoking both particularities and generalities of marking distinctive features of past, present or future practice. (e.g. But isn't this where we feel that we're working in isolation, that the school is really quite apart from those -- it's quite apart from the rest of what's going on. We are... this is different therefore we can move up this way because it's not going to come in. And that's what we're trying to say).*

The analysis then turned to examining in what ways such sequences mattered. If we identified strands of deixis, definition/ delineation and deliberation what were their contingent consequences for participants. Did they make visible distinctions that made the difference in ways that participants could be identified as attending to what it was necessary to attend to in order to learn to do multi-agency working? In other words, did they lead to some form of departure or development in claims concerning the practice of the participants? Thus enabling us to complete the definition of the protocol with:

Departure - *identify shifts towards qualitatively different position in practices in terms of the formulation of emergent distinctions. (e.g. It's not simply about doing presentations to schools. – we are doing some work with schools — It's a necessity for common assessment and so there needs to be something built on that in terms of protocol and procedures. So something like the um, the panel is an excellent sort of way of taking forward — because you've got It's not simply about doing presentations to schools. One of the things that we're doing in this area, we are doing some work with schools on looking – the um assessment format then we need to be [unclear – 01:45:33] (coughs) it's the first stage. It's a necessity for common assessment and so there needs to be something built on that in terms of protocol and procedures. So something like the um, the panel is an excellent sort of way of taking forward —*

because you've got the relevant professionals who meet on a regular basis. And based on an assessment, a common assessment, which is added to, action can be decided upon. And I think the first sort of reason you gave us in making sure that people actually do things is an important function of it, um, because people do need to be held to account for what they're going to do for a family. Um, so panel could work with the relevant professionals who meet on a regular basis. And based on an assessment, a common assessment, which is added to, action can be decided upon. And I think the first sort of reason you gave us – in making sure that people actually do things is an important function of it, um, because people do need to be held to account for what they're going to do for a family).

Development - *identify when participants specify new ways of working that provide the basis for becoming part of, or have become part of, what they take to be and warrant as a significant reformulation of their practices. (e.g. You're probably repeating yourself here, Educational Psychologist B. (laughs). You've even said the school would burst if it takes any more. If you've got a system and the school is under stress one way of relieving it is to take out the stressor, the child or the case and hand it to somebody else and it's their problem then. So we need to change that attitude, just think about looking at joint assessments, joint problem solving, sharing our expertise and knowledge across the school boundary. So it's sort of challenging, Sue, really what you were saying just now, because that argument is going to horizontal links. (Pause) I mean you were talking about here, keeping the child safe).*

Sequences of communicative action were analysed in the transcripts of the workshops and the development of these sequences were collated in strands which stretched across the series of workshops. Related sequences were identified and these were grouped into strands of talk that wove their way through the progress of the each series of workshops. These strands are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Strands across workshops.

- **Focusing on the whole child in the wider context.** Practitioners found this crucial to the diagnosis of vulnerability which may not be evident unless they look across aspects of a child's life and build a picture of accumulated risk. It was also essential in their orchestration of responses.

- **Being responsive to others: both professionals and clients.** Professionals claimed and demonstrated a growing awareness of the need to work relationally with each other and moved towards working more responsively with the strengths of their clients to build resilience.

- **Clarifying the purpose of work and being open to alternatives.** The discursive work in constructing explicit understandings of previously tacit assumptions of the practices of others opened possibilities for alternative ways of working. These were resources for identifying how to work together.

- **Knowing how to know who (can help).** Practitioners identified the importance of knowing the people and resources distributed in their local networks. For example, established networks were not sufficient for working on the new objects of activity that co-configured multi-agency working demanded.

- **Rule-bending and risk-taking.** Practitioners described taking risks involving rule-bending as responses to contradictions between emergent practices and systems of rules, protocols and lines of responsibility. They demonstrated the need to question the legitimacy of the existing rules in relation to their professional actions on increasingly complex objects of activity and the necessity of making visible the ways in which they worked around the barriers to action.

- **Creating and developing better (material and discursive) tools.** Practitioners identified the limitations of tools such as assessment protocols. They responded to the contradictions between currently available tools and new and emergent objects of multi-agency activity by developing and refining new conceptual and material tools, e.g., electronic assessment and communication devices.

- **Developing processes for knowledge sharing and pathways for practice.** Practitioners recognised the importance of demonstrating an outward-looking stance and an awareness of what it takes to be 'in the know' as the complex landscape of multi-agency work changes. DWR sessions provided a forum for precisely this form of activity.

- **Understanding oneself and one's professional values.** Participants recognised that articulating the particularities of their own expertise and values in order to negotiate practices with other professionals was a basis for questioning them. Enhanced forms of professional practice arose from questioning how values-driven practices might be reconfigured in relation to other professionals.

- **Taking a pedagogic stance at work.** Participants described mediating professional knowledge across boundaries in response to: contradictions between practitioner priorities and client demands (e.g. from a school or parent); needing to communicate across boundaries between professions; the need to enable operational staff to communicate the implications of emergent practices with strategists.

Some sequences progressed to departures, others remained at other stages within the model. Each Local Authority workshop witnessed distinctive patterns of development as shown in table 3.

Table 3: The distribution of emergent strands across research sites.

Concept	Local Authority 1	Local Authority 2	Local Authority 3
1. To know how to know others	Delineation	Departure Delineation	Delineation
2. Rule bending and risk taking	Delineation Development	Departure Delineation	
3. pedagogic and developmental stance at work	Delineation Development	Delineation Development	
4. creation and development of better tools	Delineation	Delineation Departure Development	Departure Development
5. work on understanding oneself and professional values	Development Delineation	Delineation Departure Development	Departure
6. to be clear what they work on and to be open to alternatives	Development Delineation	Departure Development	Departure Development
7. to organise to be able to be responsive to clients and other professionals	Delineation Departure	Delineation	Departure Development
8. to focus on the whole child in a wider context	Delineation Departure	Departure Delineation	Delineation Departure
9. to develop processes for knowledge sharing e.g. two-way flows, new pathways for practice		Delineation Departure Development	Delineation Development
10. to negotiate their institutional strategies			Departure Development
11. to recognise different assessment regimes and practices within different services and agencies			Delineation Departure Development

The research took place as practitioners such as educational psychologists, social workers, teachers and voluntary sector employees were developing new forms of inter-professional collaboration for the prevention of social exclusion. The study worked with the practitioners to reveal the **knowledge in use** in inter-professional practices as they were being developed and to identify the **implications for the organizations** in which they worked using the methodologies outlined above.

Knowledge in Use for Inter-professional Work

What practitioners needed to know and be able to do, in addition to their core expertise, fell into two sets of activity: changes in practices and changes in organizations.

Changes in practices

a) *Focusing on the whole child in the wider context.* This was crucial to (i) recognizing vulnerability by building a picture of accumulated risk and (ii) orchestrating responses focused on children's well-being.

b) *Clarifying the purpose of work and being open to alternatives.* Talking with other professionals about the purposes and implications, i.e. the 'why' and 'where to', of possible actions with children eroding inter-professional barriers by revealing common long-term values and purposes.

c) *Understanding oneself and one's professional values*. Articulating their own expertise and values in order to negotiate practices with other professionals helped practitioners understand them better. Practices were enhanced by examining how values-driven practices might be reconfigured in relation to other professionals and their purposes.

d) *Knowing how to know who.* Knowing the people and resources distributed across local networks was an important capacity but was not enough. Knowing how to access and contribute to systems of locally distributed expertise by informing interpretations and aligning responses with others was crucial.

e) *Taking a pedagogic stance at work*. This involved: (i) making one's own professional expertise explicit and accessible and (ii) being professionally multi-lingual i.e. having a working knowledge of what mattered for other professions in order to 'press the right buttons' when working with them.

f) ***Being responsive to others: both professionals and clients****.* Professionals demonstrated a growing awareness of the need to work relationally with each other and moved towards working more responsively with the strengths of their clients to build their resilience.

Changes in organizations

a) ***Rule-bending and risk-taking****.* Practitioners described taking risks involving rule-bending to pursue the well-being of children. Rule-bending was a response to contradictions between emergent practices and the established systems of rules, protocols and lines of responsibility in their home organizations.

b) ***Creating and developing better tools for collaboration.*** It was important for practitioners from all potentially collaborating services to be involved in developing new assessment tools so that the purposes of their services could be included and the assessments could be seen to be of value across services.

c) ***Developing processes for knowledge sharing and pathways for practice****.* Another important tool for collaboration was the opportunity to discuss cases and, in those discussions, reveal and learn about the expertise available locally. These discussions helped practitioners develop an outward-looking stance and openness to collaboration as well as learning about other expertise available.

d) ***Learning from practice.*** Lack of organizational adjustment in response to changing practices was a major source of frustration for practitioners, leading some to identify the need to communicate with strategists in their organizations as a new skill to be learnt.

The implications of inter-professional collaborations for professionals

Inter-professional practice is an enhanced form of practice which requires **strong understanding of one's core expertise** and also **an additional layer of expertise** which:

a) involves responsive decision-making and informed negotiations with other professionals and clients;

b) involves articulation of professional expertise when interpreting vulnerability with other professionals and making explicit one's responses to those interpretations;

c) enhances professional knowledge by working in relation to the priorities of other professions.

The Implications for Schools and other Organisations

The general challenges

Changes in practices were running ahead of changes in organisations. Operational level practitioners and strategists therefore identified the following challenges for organisations:

a) supporting staff involvement in local systems of distributed expertise whilst maintaining responsible line-management;

b) sustaining notions of professional status when fluid, collaborative and distributed working practices had destabilized professional roles, identities and established relations of authority and accountability;

c) working with different interpretations of and responses to a client's needs;

d) rethinking roles and responsibilities for collaboration to replace those aimed at single service priorities;

e) seeing rule-bending as a sign that the organization needs to adjust.

Conclusion

The data suggested that while relationships between their organizations were re-configured around them, practitioners remained focused on what they saw as the needs of children and adjusted their ways of working. In many ways their practices raced ahead of both local and national strategies as the practitioners worked creatively for children in shifting systems. Our research suggests that in some instances professional practices have moved to *co-configuration* with an attempt to adapt practices to respond to the changing needs of clients and to involve clients in co-designing the services they receive. We also identified the challenges to the learning that was needed to move to this new way of working. These challenges arise from contradictions in working practices when different professionals collaborate. Management structures, for example, could

inhibit the development of collaborative working, not least because supporting the use of expertise distributed among different professionals made line-management hard to maintain. The professional identity of practitioners working in this way became de-stabilised, and this subverted established patterns of authority and accountability. Working with professionals we discovered and developed what, using the terminology of CHAT, can be described as new *tools* and *rules* for co-configuration working. These included a professional approach to rule-bending and risk-taking to enable joined-up service provision working around systems which were not changing as fast as the child-focused inter-professional practices being developed.

The overall challenge of the project was to show how institutionally established categories and ways of arguing could be reformulated and transformed into new strategies and activities as part of learning what it is to become engaged with and in multi-agency work. In Daniels (2010) it was shown how Middleton's D analysis taken together with an application of Bernstein's sociology of pedagogy provided empirical evidence of the mutual shaping of communicative action by organizational structures and relations and the formation of new professional identities. However without the comprehensive analysis of the communicative action within the sessions across all the research sites we would not have been able to progress to the final analysis of those transformations (Daniels, 2006). The D analysis provided a means of tracking the sequential and contingent emergence of new concepts. It permits analysis of interaction as mediated by / in the institutional context and the identification of the ways on which attention and action was directed and deflected by history of professional cultures. This form of analysis of communicative action provides evidence of the ways in which the institution itself is shaped as well as shapes the possibilities for action.

In order to refine an understanding of organizational, discursive and transmission practices in such situations new theories of concept formation which emphasize the complex nature of concepts will need to be deployed. There is a need to develop current work on the predictive relationships between macro structures and micro processes.

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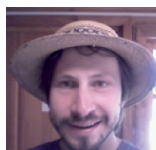
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