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Culture, autobiographical memory and self. Formal schooling as a sociocultural activity.

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ADDENDUM TO THE BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Culture and singularity in autobiographical narratives

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We intend to discuss some results of an investigation under progress that focuses on the constitution of subjectivity and its relationships with culture, education practices, memory and autobiographical narratives. The main objective of such research is the theoretical and methodological deepening of human development, from a historical-cultural perspective, which implies a dialogue with authors from different fields of knowledge, especially from History and Sociology. Based on the assumptions of this perspective, we consider that culture and education play a crucial role in psychological development and in complex subjectivation / singularization processes. Thus, based on the orientations of such approach and on other theoretical sources resulting from recent investigations, we have analyzed the complex process of the constitution of a narrative version of oneself, which has evidenced the role of culture internalization in such process. Our research has aimed at understanding traits of individual experiences and collective phenomena, as well as the game present in what is singular and in what is plural in the constitution of people's psychological universe, by means of the study on the potential of autobiographical narratives. To do so, we have aimed at conceptual and methodological deepening related to the theme under study, with the objective of collaborating with the necessary surpassing of views and beliefs about the subject's constitution processes, most of which have already been surpassed in the scientific ambit, but are still strong in the fields of Psychology and Education.

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The transferral of intentional affordances as a mechanism of sociogenesis

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The Gibsonian ecological construct of affordance can represent the bridge between interaction design, comparative psychology and neurophysiology in order to determine the foundations of sociogenesis.

According to Tomasello (1999), the understanding of intentions is a base for imitative learning because, guessing the expert's intentions, the learner is able to read through the actions of the former and reproduce them.

Thus, the artefacts of a given culture are learnt thanks to the intention recognition devices and through imitative learning in which the activity of mirror neurons could be implied (Gallese, 2005).

The discovery of mirror neurons has determined the overcoming of the dichotomy perception/action, bringing evidence that the observation of an intentional action implies the activation of neural patterns corresponding to the same activity from the observer (Gallese, 2003).

Mirror neurons are implied in the imitative learning and action anticipation processes in that they produce a simulation of the observed activity that allows, in a second, time the planning and execution of the same activity.

The transferral of intentional affordances takes place inside the Vygotskian ZPD, where the novice progressively internalises the correct use of a tool (Vygotsky, 1978). Ingold, when describing what happens during the learning of a practice, refers to the Gibsonian notion of perception: the novice tunes in resonance with the expert and learns what to perceive, and how to interpret and foresee the movements (Ingold, 1999).

In the presentation, we show some experimental evidence of the production of intentional affordances in children aged 12-18 months and, at the same time, some failures in the attempt to share intentional states and so generate the privileged modalities of use of a given artefact. We claim that these phenomena can shed sole light on the process of knowledge acquisition within the ZPD.

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Virtual Identity: How Virtual Worlds Affect Identity

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The purpose of this paper is to examine how identity is affected in virtual worlds, using the experiences of the author in the three-dimensional environment known as Second Life, a Massive Multiplayer Online Role Play Game (MMORPG). Using research in self-cognition and social group identity theories, the author examines how these perceptions of identity are influenced by Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), where activities in various communities can dynamically alter the not only the virtual personality of the member-avatar (the creator's three dimensional representation), but the real-life identity of the person behind the digital image. The activity systems of the author and each of the two avatars she has created all share a common identity, yet they have unique objects and outcomes based on the activities and accepted roles they assume as members of their respective communities.

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METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTIVITY MODELS IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

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The conceptual models of activity that are developed in the social sciences are primarily created for academic pursuits or the needs of management, marketing, social work, education, and other domains of social professions. These conceptualizations of human activity focus on the socio-normative nature of human action. Most are excellent in their own way and in their field of study and application. However, they are not intended for nor always applicable to the study of sociospatial interactions or for informing user needs research in architectural design. In order to develop the theoretical basis of pre-design phases like facility programming, there is a need for activity models that can guide researchers towards the study of sociospatial interactions. The current project proposes to provide a methodological guide for applied research.

This paper aims to provide methodological direction and insights for the creation of models of human activity which can facilitate the analysis of activity elements and structures relevant to design research. The conceptualizations that we present are developed on the basis of the "activity methodology" approach, the dialectical materialism theory of activity, and a number of other ideas used over the past few decades in Russia, Ukraine, and Bulgaria.

Our thesis is that the study of activity in respect to the built environment should consider both social and spatial elements. The sociospatial structures of activities emerge in the process of interaction between people and the built environment regarding the conditions necessary for efficient performance. Such structures of activity encompass both necessary conditions and undesirable constraints in respect to facilitating and sustaining activity processes.

The paper consists of three sections: The first section presents several abstract conceptualizations of activity. These are intended to provide a general direction for choosing activity models that have a potential for guiding sociospatial research. In the second section of the paper, selected activity models are briefly analyzed. The purpose of this section is to discover theoretical resources that are instrumental for construing the sociospatial structures of activities. In the third section, the spatial relations of agents and activities are discussed. This discussion focuses on the activity dimensions and elements that are most influenced by the availability of spatial resources and the configuration of spatial structures.

The proposed vantage point establishes the grounds for a "conditions and resources" perspective to activity. This perspective is intended as a methodological approach to the study of activity in the area of architectural design research. The subsequent steps in this project are to develop activity models for researching user needs in facility programming and planning. These activity models will function as methodological guides and organizing frameworks in specific architectural programming research projects.

Title of Symposium: Self in Culture in Mind (Double symposium)

Organizer: Tia G.B. Hansen

Institutional Affiliation: Cognitive Psychology Unit, Aalborg University, Denmark

Discussant (1)

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Symposium Abstract: One of the basic characteristics of human consciousness is that it involves a self as a subject which is also a possible object of attention of that subject itself. However, as Vygotsky, Bruner, Cole, and others from the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) family of approaches remind us, this does *not* mean that the human subject is, or could ever be, a self-contained self-reflector, isolated from its material and social ecology. On the contrary, socio-cultural activities mediate this very ability (as well as just about everything else psychological), and has a heavy hand in specifying what, exactly, within the rather wide set of opportunities left open by biological constraints, will develop into this particular human subject, his or her activities, and his or her self-reflections within and beyond their individual mind.

This double symposium brings together eight empirical studies – spanning a range of countries, ethnicities, and kinds of activity – that explore the relationship between selfhood and socio-cultural context. All presenters have a background in CHAT but employ other or additional perspectives in their recent empirical work. Thus, the symposium includes methods ranging from post-positivist to post-phenomenological ones, and perspectives from anthropology, developmental, cross-cultural, cognitive, educational, and community psychology. Besides the shared focus on the self of human consciousness and the socio-cultural mediation thereof, one or more of the concepts of autobiographical memory, gender, emotion, formal schooling, scientific practice and community building are focal in all papers.

Title of Paper #1: Culture, autobiographical memory and self. Formal schooling as a sociocultural activity

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The social practice of formal schooling is related to the development of a notion of individual and selfhood that is characteristic of modern societies. This notion includes:

- The acquisition and use of “rational” ways of thinking and remembering.
- The development of a set of values as autonomy and self-reflection.

Cross-cultural research in psychology has shown differences in the construal of self characteristics of different cultures. For instance, Western cultures may focus on individual, demonstrating an independent self-construal while Asian cultures tend to emphasize a collective or interdependent self. Differences in the emphasis on independence vs. interdependence are evidenced in diverse aspect of the self (e.g., emotions, cognitive processes, attributions and moral reasoning) (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

A global trend to an increasing model of autonomy is generally assumed. Formal schooling seems to promote the cultural model of autonomy to a great extent.

Autobiographical memory (AM) is defined as memory for the facts and events of personal meaningful past. AM is related to the self, and to the experience of personhood. Research in recent years has evidenced cultural differences in AM that are consistent with differences in self construal between cultures and are concerned with aspects like the age of the first memories, the length and the elaboration (including emotions), the content and the characters involved.

Starting from this theoretical perspective, we discuss the data from two studies developed in our groups:

- A cross-cultural study about AM, self and culture in Denmark, Spain and Mexico.
- A study about the relationship between formal schooling and AM.

Data showed that formal schooling experience seemed to promote forms of remembering autobiographical events that are similar to those that characterise the “cultures of autonomy”. These results are discussed in terms of the relationship between socio-cultural activities and autobiographical remembering and self.

Title of Paper #2: Characteristics of autobiographical memories from different socio-cultural contexts of experience. A Norwegian Study.

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This study aims to extend de la Mata and colleagues' study of autobiographical memory and self (this symposium, above) to Norwegians, and specifically focus on characteristics of autobiographical memories from two different socio-cultural contexts.

As emphasized by la Mata's group, the functions of autobiographical memory include establishing personhood and the subject's sense of self. On the one hand, this entails the experience of enduring as an individual over time. On the other hand, formal schooling seems to bring about fundamental changes in autobiographical memories. Specifically, it is suggested that formal schooling promotes those memory characteristics that predominate in autonomous cultures and independent selves, possibly at the expense of those typically found in collective cultures and interdependent selves.

In this study, we ask: If formal schooling has this impact on autobiographical memories, does it affect the subject's memories from all socio-cultural contexts equally, or is it most evident in memories from the socio-cultural context of schooling itself.

We shall investigate the question in a sample of Norwegians with higher education (i.e., several years of formal schooling). As in previous studies, we ask participants for their first memory but additionally, we ask for important memories from each of the socio-cultural contexts of school and family. All memories will be analyzed with the narrative coding protocols developed by la Mata and colleagues, and compared across socio-cultural context of origin. Results will be presented at the congress, and used to discuss the extent to which such effects of schooling on autobiographical memory and self are consistent, global changes within the person, or rather should be seen as added variability or flexibility of remembered self.

Title of Paper #3: Parental ethnotheories in bicultural (Westafrican-German) families. The influence of culture and gender.

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Parental ethnotheories have been described as manifestations of sociocultural orientations into ideas about good parenting and child care practices (i.e. Harkness & Super, 1996). Therefore, parental ethnotheories can be regarded as mediators between broader cultural meta-models and concrete behaviour contexts and child care practices. Cultural differences have been documented with respect to the orientation towards autonomy and relatedness in ideas about parenting, socialization goals and child care practices (Keller, 2007).

The broader context of this study is aimed at analyzing parental ethnotheories in bicultural Westafrican-German families. In the literature African samples are seen to represent a high orientation towards relatedness and a low orientation towards autonomy (i.e., Keller, 2007). At the same time women are considered to score higher on relatedness than men (i.e. Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Therefore the goal of this study was to disentangle the influence of culture and gender on parental ethnotheories with respect to autonomy and relatedness.

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with French speaking Westafrican and German mothers and fathers counterbalancing gender and cultural origin. Qualitative content analysis was applied to merge the information given in the interviews to certain categories rather related to autonomy or relatedness respectively. Findings will have implications for gaining a better understanding of the cultural constructs autonomy and relatedness in relation to gender as well as of the socialization goals and child care practices of bicultural Westafrican-German families.

Title of Paper #4: The attribution of self-conscious emotions (envy) in 3-5 year old children. A comparison of three cultures.

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Research on children's understanding of emotions has mainly focused on basic emotions compared to complex and self-conscious emotions. Within the category of self-conscious emotions, envy has received little interest. Although emotions are considered to be influenced by culture (Mesquita & Fridja, 1992; Mesquita & Walker, 2003) some anthropologists consider the emotion of envy to be universal (Foster, 1965; Shoenck, 1956). However, they point out that there may be cultural differences in relation to the strategies people apply when coping with conflicts caused within contexts of envy.

The aim of this study is to explore 3 to 5 year-old children's emotional comprehension in contexts of envy across three different cultures; Zapotec, Spanish and Danish. Each of the cultures hold a different view about envy. Zapotec people are afraid of envy and they consider it a threatening feeling. Spanish people view envy as a form of pride, whereas Danish people have cultural norms about how to flaunt their goods compared with other people. Hence, we expect different cultural backgrounds to influence differently on children's comprehension of envy situations.

A total of 182 Children (37 Zapotec, 45 Spanish and 100 Danish children) were told two stories, which each illustrated contexts of envy. The children were asked questions about the emotional attributions of the characters in the stories, and asked to give explanations on how to resolve the conflicts caused by envy. Preliminary results indicate that the children's abilities to give emotional attributions to envy situations are similar among cultures, while their strategies for solving conflicts vary by age and culture. We discuss these results in relation to the role different cultural backgrounds may have in the development of self-conscious emotions.

Title of Paper #5: Making one-self.

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A longitudinal study collected data through qualitative interviews and self-report questionnaires in order to highlight children's and adolescent's self-making narratives (Bruner, 1994). The interactional construction (Mead, 1934) and reconstruction will appear alongside rich quotations from the study mixed with findings from several surveys. Part of the study used a phenomenological interpretation of the data.

Findings show e.g. that culture, time, space and body can be used as dynamic frameworks for understanding specific identity constructions. Limitations for this research as well as further directions for new studies will be pinpointed in the end.

Keywords describing this research: Children's and adolescent's self-concept construction, self-making narratives, mixed-methods.

Title of Paper #6: Characteristics and use of naturally occurring memories: His and hers in Denmark and Spain.

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"Mental time travelling" – i.e., bringing particular episodes from the personal past into consciousness in the present, and employing these to project the future – is a fundamental human capacity associated with autonöetic (self-knowing) consciousness (Tulving, 1985). In activity theoretical terms, such autobiographical memories are conscious re-reflections of integrated subject-object-context entities, which can be explored by the remembering subject after the relevant loco-motoric and perceptual actions are no longer an option. This is probably a uniquely human kind of reflection, and it mediates human activity in several important ways (Larsen, 1983).

Theorists in the areas generally agree that autobiographical memories serve three kinds of functionality: self-related (e.g., identity formation, self-continuity), social (e.g., attachment, communication), and directive functions (e.g., goal-setting, using former experience as guidance for action). Although these functional kinds are probably universal, gender and cultural variation in the characteristics and actual use of personal memories in daily life should be expected. Remembering oneself develops in socio-cultural practices, too. For example, Western Mothers encourage children to elaborate more than Asian Mothers do (Wang, 2007), and encourage emotional reflection more with daughters than sons (Fivush et al., 2003).

Our study investigates perceived use and usefulness-related characteristics of autobiographical memories in everyday life. Specifically, we compare women and men in Denmark (which usually scores low on gender difference measures) and Spain (medium scores). We used an adapted diary method to sample 990 naturally occurring instances of remembering from 110 young Danes. Some gender differences were found, e.g., men reported more memories used for goal setting, and women more memories in third person perspective. However, differences were few. The comparison sample from Spain is presently being compiled, and results will be presented at the congress.

Title of Paper #7: Reconstructing the self - Community development in Paamiut, Greenland.

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In Paamiut in Kalallit Nunaat/Greenland a community mobilization program has been launched as a response to a history of violence, suicides and drug abuse. The program is developed by the community through public meetings and interviews of an inclusive sample of community members. The overall goal of the program is to strengthen community resilience and revitalization of the culture through values and resources, shared activities, job opportunities and options for entrepreneurship. The objectives are (1) to support the quality of the local school, (2) to support local people in developing 5 new and sustainable vocations, (3) to make a 50% decrease in incidents of violence, other criminal acts, suicide, and substance abuse, (4) to create transparency in decision-making in the public service and administration, and (5) to prevent child neglect.

Shared values were formulated as (a) pride of being able to fend for oneself, (b) solidarity in the family and in the community, (c) openness, curiosity and hospitality, (d) respect for people, equipment and the environment, (e) peacefulness and tolerance, and (f) active participation and development instead of passive adjustment. However, a survey showed a significant gap between the individual appreciation of the values and how they were seen practised in the community as the latter was remarkably lower. This gap fosters and maintains a concept of the self as being separated from the community. But it is also the entry point of the community mobilization as it opens for shared reflection and activities that may lessen this gap. The results of focus group interviews with young people show how the shared reflection and initiation of activities lead to a concept of the self as linked to active participation in the community, thus entailing a sense of belonging, connectedness, efficacy and hope.

Title of Paper #8: Body and artefacts in CHAT.

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This contribution presents an analysis carried out in relation to the European project UPGEM (Understanding Puzzles in the Gendered Map of Europe) about career paths in physics.

Beginning with a Vygotskyan framework I shall rephrase a question once posed by Michael Cole: 'Why is it so difficult to keep culture in mind?' and ask 'Why is it so difficult to keep body in the mind?' In this paper I shall try to find an answer through combination a postphenomenological approach with cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) in an analysis of how physicists learn through bodily motility and perception of reaction. I shall argue that to understand how learning cultural perception in science evolves, we need to combine a CHAT-approach with a postphenomenological approach.

This theoretical combination makes it possible to examine how scientists are engaged in a deep sense in an empirical examination of "the things themselves" with material constraints and how these constraints meets the human bodies which, while not transcendental subjects, are cultured. In a postphenomenological sense artefacts are not considered external, and are not reducible to representation or subjective experience. The very structure of artefacts is multistable, with respect to uses in activity. Through a thorough study of how 20 scientists perceive the same material objects (pictures of scientific artefacts) I argue that different perceptions are connected to cultural learning processes. This study challenge understandings of internalist science as well as notions of objectivity. Doing away with Cartesian epistemology and metaphysics makes it possible to understand artefacts in new controversial ways as both mediated by the social culture, unruly and multistable, and yet embodied.

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Title symposium:**Knowledge construction in a school that learns.****A research and development work project in a primary and lower secondary school in Norway.****Chair and organizer: May Britt Postholm, NTNU, Norway****Discussant: Michael Cole, University of California, San Diego, USA**

National regulations in Norway regarding teaching emphasize that teachers should develop their teaching competence. Influenced by this, several Research and Development (R&D) work projects have been funded by the Norwegian Research Council. In this contextual framework seven researchers initiated an R&D project in a primary and lower secondary. The overall research question was: *With the students learning as the basis: How can teachers and researchers cooperate to develop the teaching practice and the school as a learning organization?* Thus the overall aim for the R&D work was to create a practice involving co-construction of knowledge to develop the teaching practice to enhance the pupils learning. Three subprojects' research questions related to the overall question were formed in collaboration with teachers belonging to various classes in the school. These questions focus on portfolio assessment, learning environment and adapted teaching and various learning methods and learning strategies. The fourth project focus on how knowledge is shared in a collectivistic culture. In this symposium the focus is directed to dialogues and reflection processes, and on how these processes were organized to arrange for co-construction of knowledge. The first presentation outlines a theoretical framework for reflexivity related to action research. The two next presentations direct their focus on concrete R&D work, and the fourth and last presentation discusses how teachers can share to learn and how they can learn to share knowledge. Intersubjectivity has become a central concept both in the planning and in the analyses of the accomplished R&D work. .

Reflexivity and the construction of knowledge**Tove Steen-Olsen and Astrid G. Eikseth, Teacher College South-Trøndelag, Norway**

Reflexivity can be viewed as an introspective ability to examine personal reasoning and ways of living. At the same time it is investigation of established reasoning. Reflexivity constitutes an instance of correction concerning individual thoughts, values and actions. In a world with multiple truths, reflexivity is essential. Ratio has become post rational. (Beck et al., 1994).

While reflection is closely related to knowledge, reflexivity is related to being self referential. By overseeing this distinction it is difficult to grasp the often unintended character of reflexivity. Reflection can be placed on the conscious level, while reflexivity can be placed on the unconscious level. Habermas' (1984) 'communicative society' can serve as an example of deliberate reflection, while Beck and Giddens' (1994) self-dissolutive 'reflexive modernisation' can serve as an example of reflexivity. In between we find Bourdieu's understanding of reflexivity as systematic introspection of personal predispositions and categories for knowledge construction and understanding. This is a form of self observation only made possible by altering perspective and by taking a perspective of second order (Bateson, 1956). Ability to alter perspective (meta perspective) is the foundation of reflexivity.

Trough out his research Bourdieu (1977, 1991, 1993, 1997) challenged the researcher's preconceptions. He warned researchers against adapting 'false matters of course' or fixed classifications from everyday life. All the same, everyday life thinking was a central theme in Bourdieu's research. People have a practical knowledge guiding their meanings and actions. The researcher's job is to lift everyday thinking to an analytical level and to analyze its immanent discourses and practices (habitus). All social actions have an immanent logic, even when they appear as something else. Actions and habits need not to be reflected upon or made conscious, but in the process of after rationalization (reflexivity) they might be.

Why is reflexivity important in knowledge construction? Furthermore, why is reflexivity essential in action research?

Methodological reflections are crucial concerning the rigor of the study. Reflexivity in social sciences is the concept used to explore and deal with the relationship between the researcher and the object of research. Reflexivity helps the constant analysis of one's own theoretical and methodological presuppositions. This kind of reflexivity can be subdivided in two forms, *epistemic* and *methodological* (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). While epistemic reflexivity focuses on the researcher's belief system (the process for analysing and challenging meta-theoretical assumptions), methodological reflexivity focuses on monitoring the researcher's behavioural impact upon the research setting. Reflexivity in this way has *epistemological* (grounds for knowledge) and *ontological* (nature of existence) implications (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1987). Search for absolute truth, lifted above any possibility for revision, is today viewed as a blind step in social sciences, and the researcher's being in the world seldom

differentiates exquisite from other participants in the research project. In stead of eliminating the influences of the researcher and the researcher's belief systems, these factors should be openly debated in order to strengthen the rigor of the study.

**“My understanding of these things has expanded”
Teachers' knowledge construction in classroom management
Torill Moen, Department of Education, NTNU, Norway**

Through participation in several international studies, Norwegian pupils are being compared to pupils in other countries. So far these studies show that the Norwegian pupils do not have as good performance as we would like them to have. In the public debates and professional analysis that follow, the focus is put on various factors that might explain the results of these studies. For example the focus is often put on the teacher, claiming that the teacher is the most important factor for pupils' learning in schools. Closely connected to this is that our teachers should learn to be better teachers. The crucial question is then, how do teachers learn? How do they construct new knowledge that could be useful for them in their teaching? Teachers' learning is the topic of this paper.

As a researcher in a three-year-lasting action research project I spend time together with three teachers teaching pupils in 7th grade. For various reasons these particular 7th grade teachers are concerned with classroom management, and the research question of this study is; *How do teachers construct knowledge in classroom management?* In this paper I will present the action research project and its methodological approach. Thereafter I will present utterances from the teachers in the 7th grade when discussing and reflecting on their teaching, and in particular on problems connected to classroom management. The utterances will be analysed within the framework of socio-cultural theory. I conclude the article with a discussion of some crucial topics that emerge from the text.

There are various reasons why this study is important: Within the field of educational research, a great many studies have focused on student teachers learning (see for example Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Grossman, Compton, Shahan, Ronfeldt, Igra & Shaing 2007). Although there are some studies concerning teachers learning (see for example Meirink, Meijer & Verloop 2007), in comparison not much is known about how experienced teachers learn (Beijaard, Korthagen & Verloop 2007). One can therefore imagine that this study, focusing on how experienced teachers learn, is relevant for educational researchers concerned with the topic. In particular, one can suppose that the study is relevant from the perspective of an action researcher. Action research is interactive (Coghlan & Brannick 2005), something which means that the researcher and teachers should collaborate to improve practice. The crucial question is how and in which way should researchers contribute in this collaborative process? Furthermore, one can imagine that the study is important for teachers. Being a teacher is not something you learn once and for all at a teacher education college. On the contrary, being a teacher means being a learner, i.e. being in a constant process of development. Therefore, if teachers read this study, one could imagine that the text can contribute to their reflection on how they learn something that may be useful for them in their further development as teachers.

**Observations and reflections in a teacher team focusing on learning strategies
May Britt Postholm, NTNU, Norway**

The presentation is based on the sub-project framed by the question: “How can various work methods focusing on learning strategies contribute to each and every child's social and subject development. The teachers at the 7th, 9th and 10th grade level in the studied practices experience their work as consisting of a variety of duties, and among them, of course, the pupils' learning. The purpose of the presentation is to show how a project involving a researcher and a teacher team encourages the teachers to reflect on observed teaching processes, and, furthermore, to show what the form and content of such reflection processes can lay the foundation for co-construction of knowledge. Findings from the project show that when teachers question their own practice, they can transcend their teaching, meaning they can think of and see new things. Furthermore, the teachers find it useful to exchange experiences and tips which they later adapt to their own teaching. They utter that they become very positive to development when it is so useful.

I, the researcher, had defined my role as trying to keep the teachers on track during their reflections, and furthermore to connect their experiences to theories. My assumption was that theory can help teachers to analyse and understand practice, that theory can help them to argue for their teaching practice, and that theory can help them see possibilities for development in their practice. When connecting theory and practice, teachers got experience in how to *reflect before action*, reflecting on prior

experiences by using theory, and how they can *reflect in action* and *on action*, connecting theoretical concepts to their teaching practice. In this way theories served as a tool in reflection processes, reflection processes that could help the teachers to see the connection between everyday actions and scientific concepts. A question is what knowledge teachers need to reflect on their teaching. I will discuss *what* theory teachers' need as a thinking tool and in their dialogues and reflections to improve practice.

Action research means that teachers and researchers work and talk together to change and improve practice. At the same time researchers also do have questions that direct their research activity. This means that researchers both do "research with" and "research on" teachers and their teaching activity. When researchers are together with the teachers in their practice, researching with them, their role is to facilitate teachers in their work to make a better practice. This challenges researchers' communicative, social and knowledge competence. Furthermore, teachers have to see the need for development and willingly participate in developmental processes, listening to and using researchers as resource persons. Within a cultural context meeting these requirements there are possibilities for both parties to learn. The researcher can develop her understanding about the studied practice and furthermore bring this knowledge into further research. The teachers can develop their understanding about their own and others teaching, which they can utilize in their daily practice. So, an R&D project can lay the foundation for knowledge construction for all participants.

Moving from individual to organizational learning

Astrid M. Sølvsberg & Marit Rismark

This presentation elaborates on how teachers in the R&D project, in cooperation with the researchers, strived to develop their school as a learning organization. This involved moving focus from individual learning towards the development of a culture for knowledge sharing. The school was organized in three teacher teams. We collected data during knowledge sharing activities and interviewed teachers about their experiences during these activities.

Due to new demands placed upon schools and teachers in our current learning society, teachers are expected to learn continuously. Faced with continuous demands for change and developments, the teachers in our school voiced barriers for knowledge sharing. Teachers reported little time to interact with colleagues and they expressed a wish for more time for knowledge sharing. They felt overwhelmed with expectations and although teachers emphasized the importance of knowledge sharing, they hardly found time for this. On this background, teachers may come to find themselves in a situation where each teacher by and large works individually to meet challenges and demands. Thus, the overall aim of developing the school as a learning organization may be at risk.

A linchpin for moving individual learning to organizational learning is dissemination, the sharing of knowledge, skills and insights. Professional development efforts are often seen to be directed toward individual teachers, for example by attending courses. The implied assumption is that teachers eventually share their individual learning with colleagues and thus effect change at the organizational level. Although individual learning is a necessary first step, it is insufficient to achieve organizational learning. Unless individuals disseminate or share what they have learned, "insights gained from action and reflection are not fully realized at the organizational level" (Shaw & Perkins, 1992, p. 178). In its strongest form, dissemination is more than a one-way relay of information; it is an extension of the reflective process, moving reflection from the individual to the group level (Collinson & Cook, 2003).

We discuss how teachers in our school moved from individual learning towards learning at group level by allowing knowledge created by individuals to crystallize at group level in the school. By the use of the theoretical construct of 'intersubjectivity' we illustrate different paths from individual learning to organizational learning.

Kitt Lyngsnes

Teachers improving learning environments by observing, acting and reflecting in team

This presentation discusses an R&D sub-project involving a team of three teachers working to improve the learning environments for their students at the 8th grade level, focusing on the school hours where the students are supposed to work independently with the teachers helping and instructing ("arbeidstimer"). According to the latest PISA-study learning environments in Norwegian classrooms often are quite poor because of noise, interruptions, students not listening to the teachers, lack of structure and so on. Faced with forty-five students with a variety of learning needs, and a number of behavioral issues preventing learning and effective instruction, these teachers' objective was to improve the learning environments to promote positive engagement and learning outcomes. It was also important to enhance the interaction between students and teachers for instructional purposes and minimize the interaction for disciplinary purposes. The presentation outlines how the teachers using observation and reflection identified problems and pitfalls, and planned and implemented actions. Attention will also be given to the teachers' reflections over the outcomes of the project so far both for themselves and the students.

Teachers' knowledge construction in classroom management

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Title of Symposium: CHAT and Higher Education Part 1

Organizer/Chair:

Gordon Wells

Institutional Affiliation: University of California, Santa Cruz, USA

Symposium Abstract

This two-part symposium addresses the pivotal role of higher education in the lifelong development of individuals and of society more generally. Reacting, in part, to increasing criticism of the effects on undergraduate education of the corporate business model adopted by many universities and colleges, the papers in this symposium describe how CHAT principles can radically improve the quality of the education that students experience and consider how these experiences better prepare them to be ethical, critical, and proactive members of the professions they aspire to join. The papers in the first session start from a variety of predicaments and perceived contradictions in the authors' institutions and describe the solutions they developed. These focus on the role of new technologies and practices of interpersonal mediation: in enhancing opportunities for learning; in enabling students with disabilities to participate in and contribute to higher education; and in facilitating the transition from university to workplace. The second session focuses on teacher education as a particular field that engages with all these issues; the papers build on the central role in education of collaboration in purposeful activities to examine ways of enabling students and faculty to re-envisage their roles as learners and teachers. Focusing on the mediating power of innovative teaching practices and institutional reorganization, the papers examine: how an advanced certificate course was redesigned to be more learner centered; how an attempt was made to teach a course on educational theory so that it enacts the theory it teaches; and how CHAT principles were the basis for reorganizing a University College of Education. Both sessions will include opportunities for the audience to discuss the papers.

Title of Paper #1 Knowledge construction, transfer and expertise: the link between Higher Education and the knowledge economy

Geoff Hayward, Ioanna Kinti & Natalie Lundsteen

SKOPE

Department of Education

University of Oxford

Abstract

The starting point of this paper is the growing importance in government policy around the world of the link between Higher Education and the developing knowledge economy (Lundvall and Archibugi, 2001). The presentation will argue that such policy, focused on twin modes of innovation and the increased supply of graduates, effectively places the key processes of knowledge construction and transfer in black boxes. The result is that while both the bringing together of expert practitioners from Higher Education and the private sectors for purposes of innovation, and the improved supply of graduates, is supposed to increase economic growth, the means by which this is to be achieved is treated as a form of magic.

Drawing upon empirical evidence from studies on innovation and graduates making transitions between Higher Education and working in summer internships in a merchant bank, this paper addresses this issue by providing a conceptual framework that encompasses knowledge construction and transfer in the two modes outlined above. This framework draws upon the ideas of epistemic cultures as elaborated by Knorr Cetina (1999) and her notion of knowledge objects, drawing on Rheinberger (2005), and cultural historical activity theory with the central problematique conceptualised as learning. In the case of experts coming together for the purposes of innovation learning how to negotiate to take work forward; in the case of new graduates understanding the different demands of learning in the workplace, and the central role of relational agency (Edwards, 2005) in that process.

In both cases the starting point is the idea of interacting but in separate activity domains. The term activity domain is coined to indicate that in the case of processes of innovation through inter-organisational collaboration, which typically takes place at the boundaries of organisations over relatively short-time periods, full blown activity systems are unlikely to develop. Actors involved in such innovation processes join inter-organisational project teams as subjects of their home organisation activity systems, having internalised the rules and division of labour of their 'home' community which provides their epistemic culture. Working in the new project team then involves a process of boundary balancing, during which the knowledge objects of the

project are negotiated and constructed through processes of situated learning.

For graduates, the process involved in making the transition from Higher Education to work is one of boundary crossing rather than boundary balancing. Here the interaction is between two developed activity systems, but each with different epistemic cultures and knowledge objects. Situated learning theory provides the means for understanding how these undergraduates make sense of the transition between learning in the university and learning in the workplace. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of this conceptual framework for teaching and learning in Higher Education and processes of collaborative innovation.

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Title of Paper #2 Becoming and Un-becoming Disabled: using CHAT to understand undergraduate's developing identities at the boundaries of disability.

Jan Georgeson

University of Bath / University of Oxford

Abstract

In this paper I explain how CHAT can contribute to an understanding of how students who declare a disability respond to the experience of Higher Education. The data are drawn from a national study that followed a cohort of disabled students through their undergraduate courses at different UK universities, as legislative changes to address disability discrimination impacted on provision for disabled students. Analysing disability services and academic departments as separate but interdependent activity systems revealed contradictions both within and between central and departmental systems, some of which stem from familiar tensions between the standards and inclusion agendas. I argue that students who, for a variety of reasons, are positioned at the boundaries of disability are particularly likely to be involved in working through such contradictions, and that this can affect the development of both their own identities and lecturers' understanding of disability provision. In one university with longstanding links with industry and a tradition of widening participation, closer examination of the effective object of activity within departments showed that lecturers were concerned that in addition to acquiring subject specific knowledge students should also develop the basic skills and personal qualities that they would need in their work. These twin priorities operated in conjunction with the conceptual tools and procedural rules used by different university departments to accommodate difference, to produce localised variation in lecturers' understanding of disability. These understandings came to the fore in the case of students who could be considered as "borderline". Evidence from five such students shows how differences in particular tools and rules within departments, especially those concerned with assessment, influenced the extent to which students incorporated disability into their identities during the course of their university studies, and the extent to which they managed their own needs. Finally I consider whether clarifying the position of borderline students offers a way to explore the boundary zone between institutions' systems that promote the different standard and inclusion agendas.

Title of Paper #3 The Predicament of the Learner in the Networked University.

Russell Francis, John Furlong & Anne Edwards

Department of Education, Oxford University

Abstract

This paper illustrates how socio-cultural and activity theory might be used to conceptualise the predicament of the learner in the networked university. It draws on qualitative data collected from a cognitive anthropology

focused on the digitally mediated practices of sixteen post-graduate students who lived in an Oxford college. The paper argues that learners are confronted with challenges and choices as they attempt to negotiate personalised learning trajectories through a rapidly changing mediascape. The data illustrates some of the ways agentive and highly resourceful individuals are creatively appropriating new media for course-related study and self-education. Examples illustrate learners: (i) creatively appropriating commercial tools and resources, like the Amazon.com book recommendation system, for literature searching; (ii) actively cultivating globally distributed funds of living knowledge with the aid of social software tools and (iii) learning through participation in online affinity spaces (supported by groupware technologies). An activity theoretical conceptualisation of the predicament of the learner highlights how and why traditional practices and structures are being subverted by emergent learning practices afforded by the accessibility of new media forms. The schema draws our attention to the tensions and contradictions manifest in the practices and everyday lives of university students, who are situated at the faultlines of media convergence, and illustrates why cultural change is driven from the bottom-up as thousands of students are innovating new learning strategies and breaking away from the hierarchical top-down structures of the traditional university. These observations suggest that we may be witnessing the 'decentring' of the traditional university as new media forms and near-ubiquitous access to the Internet empower learners to take control of their own learning trajectories. Finally, the argument stresses why we need to consider learners' emerging or 'projective' identities (Gee, 2004) as powerful mediators of learning activity in new mediascapes, given the loss of many of the enabling constraints implicit in the structuring structures of formal educational institutions and paper-based learning media.

Title of Symposium: CHAT and Higher Education Part 2

Symposium Abstract

This two-part symposium addresses the pivotal role of higher education in the lifelong development of individuals and of society more generally. Reacting, in part, to increasing criticism of the effects on undergraduate education of the corporate business model adopted by many universities and colleges, the papers in this symposium describe how CHAT principles can radically improve the quality of the education that students experience and consider how these experiences better prepare them to be ethical, critical, and proactive members of the professions they aspire to join. The papers in the first session start from a variety of predicaments and perceived contradictions in the authors' institutions and describe the solutions they developed. These focus on the role of new technologies and practices of interpersonal mediation: in enhancing opportunities for learning; in enabling students with disabilities to participate in and contribute to higher education; and in facilitating the transition from university to workplace. The second session focuses on teacher education as a particular field that engages with all these issues; the papers build on the central role in education of collaboration in purposeful activities to examine ways of enabling students and faculty to re-envisage their roles as learners and teachers. Focusing on the mediating power of innovative teaching practices and institutional reorganization, the papers examine: how an advanced certificate course was redesigned to be more learner-centered; how an attempt was made to teach a course on educational theory so that it enacts the theory it teaches; and how CHAT principles were the basis for reorganizing a University College of Education. Both sessions will include opportunities for the audience to discuss the papers.

Organizer/Chair (1)

Gordon Wells

Institutional Affiliation: University of California, Santa Cruz, USA

Title of Paper #1 Activity and Language in Advanced Graduate Study

William Barowy & Joan Thormann

Lesley University/Cambridge, MA

Abstract

Recent work integrating Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) with Systemic Linguistics (SL) forms a basis for systematizing action research in higher education. This basis strengthens what are often otherwise its methodological weaknesses, namely, the disconnection between analysis and subsequent plans for action and the dearth of generalized results. Activity Theory provides the linguistic resources to identify essential elements of human activity and to characterize its processes of development. Systemic Linguistics offers the linguistic resources to describe how language functions in the activity of education and of action research. The methods and units of analysis of CHAT and SL are specific and cross multiple scales, making it

possible to put what happens during relatively short episodes of learning in relation to the prolonged work of completing a degree program and to the still lengthier processes of organizational change. Situating action research in relation to theory helps to overcome the limitations of "local knowledge" internal to the study while, external to the study, contributing to the set of theoretical applications. To illustrate the usefulness of SL and CHAT to analyze teaching teachers to conduct research, we describe our own action research in a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study program. Beginning with the redesign of initially independent teacher research and thesis courses to function as one, we envision a more learner-centered program that engages our students, who are teachers and administrators, in transforming the conditions of their own schools.

Title of Paper #2 Walking the Talk when Teaching about Teaching
Gordon Wells & Tamara Ball
University of California, Santa Cruz

Abstract: Starting from the belief that Higher Education functions as a pivot with respect both to lifelong learning by individuals and the development of society as a whole, we argue that a reorientation of learning and teaching in HE is required such that emphasis is placed on understanding, seen as a basis for responsible, collective action, rather than on amassing knowledge as an investment to secure individual advancement. In this paper we discuss two attempts to (re)design and implement undergraduate education in ways that link understanding of theory to purposeful action and reflection. The first involves our efforts to redesign a course entitled "Introduction to Theories of Education," which is taken each year by 300 undergraduates, many of whom are considering a career in education. We outline the organization of this course, with its emphasis on small group activity and discussion, and describe how groups took up the opportunity to choose and research a topic of shared interest under the umbrella theme of sustainability, and then, using the fruits of their inquiry, to design a curriculum unit on this theme. The second concerns a summer apprenticeship program that pairs an inquiry-based "communication curriculum" with research experience in science and engineering. Each winter, interdisciplinary cohorts of S&E graduate student researchers work in teams to design learning activities that they are responsible for facilitating the following summer. These activities serve simultaneously as scaffolds for undergraduates transitioning from classroom to lab settings and as a "teaching lab" for graduate student researchers, many of whom are tackling sociocultural learning theory for the first time. We shall conclude with a discussion of what we have learned from each of these attempts to put CHAT theory into practice by creating a reciprocal relationship between theory and praxis.

Title of Paper #3 Teaching As I Was Taught
Ric Hovda
San Diego State University

Increasingly, the work of preparing teachers is guided by sets of standards established by both state agencies and professional organizations. While the standards are often quite compatible with one another in broad terms related to teaching, they do not adequately speak to essential elements and knowledge about learning. Further, the standards are not sufficient to design programs that address the social, historical, and cultural dimensions of learning. Developing programs to prepare educators to teach according to CHAT principles requires other standards/guidelines that recognize the critical role of these principles in the way the program is structured to support teachers in their learning. In other words, the focus should be on preparing educators by "experiencing" authentically the principles they are being prepared to implement with students rather than learning "about" the principles.

This presentation focuses on the work of a teacher preparation program at a large, urban university adopting and embedding the standards Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) in its programs. Specifically, the presentation will address commitments embraced by the college faculty and administrators that provided the rationale and foundation for adoption of the CREDE standards. The first commitment was to embrace a common, theoretically coherent vision of the goals of public education and the appropriate means (practices and artifacts) to achieve the vision. Second, the faculty and administrators of the program shared a commitment that pre-service educators need to be taught by professors and clinical faculty who 'walk their talk' so that the students themselves experience the model - in practice - that they are being taught to adopt. Third, was a commitment to identify and support local schools and cooperating teachers that would adopt a similar vision that provides consistency in the learning experience as candidates learn through apprenticeship.

How this approach is being implemented, the extent of the progress toward establishing this model, and the challenges experienced will be discussed.