Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context

This book comprehensively covers all major topics of Vygotskian educational theory and its classroom applications. Particular attention is paid to the Vygotskian idea of child development as a consequence rather than premise of learning experiences. Such a reversal allows for new interpretations of the relationships between cognitive development and education at different junctions of the human life span. It also opens new perspectives on atypical development, learning disabilities, and assessment of children’s learning potential. Classroom applications of Vygotskian theory, teacher preparation, and the changing role of a teacher in a sociocultural classroom are discussed in addition to the issues of learning activities and peer interaction. Relevant research findings from the United States, Western Europe, and Russia are considered together to clarify the possible new applications of Vygotskian ideas in different disciplinary areas. The sociocultural orientation of Vygotskian theory helps to reveal learning patterns that become obscured in more traditional research.

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Contents

List of Contributors xi
Series Foreword xiii

Introduction: Sociocultural Theory and Education: Students, Teachers, and Knowledge 1
Alex Kozulin, Boris Gindis, Vladimir S. Ageyev, and Suzanne M. Miller

PART I: CONCEPTS AND PARADIGMS

1 Psychological Tools and Mediated Learning 15
Alex Kozulin

2 The Zone of Proximal Development in Vygotsky’s Analysis of Learning and Instruction 39
Seth Chaiklin

3 Vygotsky’s Doctrine of Scientific Concepts: Its Role for Contemporary Education 65
Yuriy V. Karpov

4 Some Cognitive Tools of Literacy 83
Kieran Egan and Natalka Gajdamaschko

5 Dynamic Assessment of the Evolving Cognitive Functions in Children 99
Carol S. Lidz and Boris Gindis

PART II: DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

6 Periods in Child Development: Vygotsky’s Perspective 119
Holbrook Mahn

7 Development Through the Lifespan: A Neo-Vygotskian Approach 138
Yuriy V. Karpov
8 Learning and Development of Preschool Children from the Vygotskian Perspective  
Elena Bodrova and Deborah J. Leong  
156

9 The Learning Activity in the First Years of Schooling: The Developmental Path Toward Reflection  
Galina Zuckerman  
177

10 Remediation Through Education: Sociocultural Theory and Children with Special Needs  
Boris Gindis  
200

PART III: SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY APPLICATION IN THE CLASSROOM

11 Cultural–Historical Theory and Mathematics Education  
Jean Schmittau  
225

12 Sociocultural Theory and the Practice of Teaching Historical Concepts  
Jacques Haenen, Hubert Schrijnemakers, and Job Stufkens  
246

13 Formation of Learning Activity and Theoretical Thinking in Science Teaching  
Hartmut Giest and Joachim Lompscher  
267

14 How Literature Discussion Shapes Thinking: ZPDs for Teaching/Learning Habits of the Heart and Mind  
Suzanne M. Miller  
289

15 Beyond Cognition: A Vygotskian Perspective on Emotionality and Teachers’ Professional Lives  
Anne DiPardo and Christine Potter  
317

PART IV: DIVERSE LEARNERS AND CONTEXTS OF EDUCATION

16 Intrapersonal Communication and Internalization in the Second Language Classroom  
James P. Lantolf  
349

17 Mediation in Cognitive Socialization: The Influence of Socioeconomic Status  
Pedro R. Portes and Jennifer A. Vadeboncoeur  
371

18 Cultural Modeling: CHAT as a Lens for Understanding Instructional Discourse Based on African American English Discourse Patterns  
Carol D. Lee  
393
## Contents

19  The Relations of Learning and Student Social Class: Toward Re-“socializing” Sociocultural Learning Theory  
    Carolyn P. Panofsky  
    411

20  Vygotsky in the Mirror of Cultural Interpretations  
    Vladimir S. Ageyev  
    432

Author Index  
    451

Subject Index  
    457
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Series Foreword

This series for Cambridge University Press is becoming widely known as an international forum for studies of situated learning and cognition. Innovative contributions are being made by anthropology; by cognitive, developmental, and cultural psychology; by computer science; by education; and by social theory. These contributions are providing the basis for new ways of understanding the social, historical, and contextual nature of learning, thinking, and practice that emerges from human activity. The empirical settings of these research inquiries range from the classroom to the workplace, to the high-technology office, and to learning in the streets and in other communities of practice.

The situated nature of learning and remembering through activity is a central fact. It may appear obvious that human minds develop in social situations and extend their sphere of activity and communicative competencies. But cognitive theories of knowledge representation and learning alone have not provided sufficient insight into these relationships.

This series was born of the conviction that new and exciting interdisciplinary syntheses are under way as scholars and practitioners from diverse fields seek to develop theory and empirical investigations adequate for characterizing the complex relations of social and mental life and for understanding successful learning wherever it occurs. The series invites contributions that advance our understanding of these seminal issues.

Roy Pea
Christian Heath
Lucy Suchman
Social-Cognitive Perspectives on Personality. Mischel’s Cognitive-Affective Model of Personality and the Person-Situation Debate. Mischel’s cognitive-affective personality theory countered earlier trait theories and resulted in the person-situation debate.

Learning Objectives. The social-cognitive theory of personality emphasizes both learning and cognition as sources of individual differences in personality. Reciprocal determinism: Critics of social-cognitive theory argue that the theory does not provide a full explanation of how social cognition, behavior, environment, and personality are related (known as “reciprocal determinism”). One of the main criticisms of the social-cognitive theory is that it is not a unified theory.