Oxford Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research and the Forum for English and Drama in Education

Vygotsky, Pedagogy, English, Drama: A Research Symposium

Monday 4th to Tuesday 5th July, 2011
Department of Education, University of Oxford

For information on how to find the department, go to http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/contact/how-to-find-us/
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Vygotsky’s work can be understood as a radical experimental method, a psychology of art and a philosophical argument. But Vygotsky also pursued a pedagogical project and this project came to inform seminal studies of language and learning, play and the development of writing following the first English translation of *Thought and Language* in 1962. A generation of teachers, teacher educators and educational researchers came to Vygotsky’s ideas through the writing of Bruner, Britton, Moll and others. Key ideas such as the zone of proximal development and the inter-relationship of thinking and speech were appropriated in various ways and had different kinds of influence. New directions for research were stimulated by subsequent interests in the concept of activity, in mediation and by reinterpretations of culture in response to increasing sociocultural diversity. A ‘third generation’ of activity theory emerged in Helsinki from Engeström and a ‘third space’ in Los Angeles from Gutiérrez.

In terms of English and Drama Education – and in particular, in relation to questions of pedagogy – where are we now with Vygotsky? Did Vygotsky have his day and have we ‘moved on’? Is there a ‘Vygotskian legacy’, a residual set of ideas that continue to have influence but perhaps go un-noticed? Have English and Drama Educators never really engaged with large parts of Vygotsky’s work, concentrating instead on the concerns of the works first translated? What happened to play and to literature and creativity? Does the work of Engeström and Gutiérrez suggest the future lies with ‘formative interventions’ and participatory research? Do English and Drama teachers need Vygotsky to help us develop a coherent theory of mind? How do Vygotsky’s ideas relate to those from ethnography, anthropology and sociolinguistics in developing our understanding of pedagogy?

Speakers in this research symposium will be encouraged to present their own perspectives on these questions - and others - and will be invited to engage in debate and discussion with each other. This will be a small symposium with limited places so that all participants can take part in all discussions. Each participant will be asked to talk for up to 30 minutes, no more, and with the use of Powerpoint confined to the projection of images and quotations (if it is used at all). Participants will work together towards the writing of a short closing statement that will reflect the discussions that have taken place. In the longer term, participants will be encouraged to work together to develop further proposals.
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All sessions in Seminar Room A, 15 Norham Gardens.

PROGRAMME

Monday 4th July 2011

11am Coffee

11.30 First session, chaired by Viv Ellis (3)

1pm Lunch

2pm Second session, chaired by Tony Burgess & Lila McDowell (5)

4.30pm Tea

5pm Oxford Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research Seminar: Peter Smagorinsky, University of Georgia
‘Vygotsky’s views on art and emotion’

6.15pm Drinks

8.00 Dinner

Tuesday 5th July 2011

9.30am Third session, chaired by Carol Fox (3)

11am Coffee

11.30 Closing session, chaired by Viv Ellis (discussion and drafting)

12.30 Lunch and close
Vygotsky, Pedagogy, English, Drama: Participants

Myra Barrs, Vygotsky in translation: Tool and Symbol/ZPD

Tony Burgess, Vygotsky, pedagogy and English teaching

Henrietta Dombey, LSV and interactive literacy teaching

Viv Ellis, Where is Vygotsky in English Education in the early 21st century?

Carol Fox, Vygotsky and play

Anton Franks, Teachers, rehearsal room pedagogies & ensemble playing

John Hardcastle, Vygotsky's contribution to English pedagogy

Lila McDowell, Vygotsky and the cognitive work of incarcerated undergraduates

Ian Thompson, Writing through mediated activity

Peter Smagorinsky, What does Vygotsky provide for 21st century literacy education?

Line Wittek, Writing as a learning resource from the perspective of Vygotsky