DEVELOPING POTENTIALS FOR LEARNING

Abstracts

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Boundary-crossing in the training of speech therapists in psychology

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The case presented belongs to the EU funded Kp-Lab project and explores boundary-crossing in a professional course. It concerns a course in psychology of relationships offered to speech therapists during their professional and academic training in a 4-years course in the University. In our intervention, we will first examine the image of the profession transmitted by the curriculum at large and then try to understand the implicit links between "theory" and "applied work". We will then consider the internships during which the students are immersed in the daily life of their future profession. These young students most often experience their first contact with difficult life situations. We will thus consider what kind of questions they formulate explicitly and draw some hypothesis about their initial implicit difficulties in boundary-crossing over the disciplines, and from the university to the field. These will guide the next steps of the intervention and the examination of the data collected about their growing understanding of the relationships involved in speech therapy. One of the difficulties of such a training is the students’ inability to link their former readings with their present observations. Another one is their shyness in discussing relationships and emotions. Yet, it was found that role-playing, discussions, and group work can contribute to the development of such skills. Another result concerns the types of expertise available in the profession. It seems that students behave as if they had been offered plenty of very limited models of action as speech therapists. They have difficulties in gaining also a general understanding of their intervention in terms of an educational/therapeutical activity to be appreciated as a whole. The results will be discussed in the perspective of activity theory, situated cognition, active and trialogical learning.

Promoting metaskills for collaborative object-oriented inquiry in a project management course

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Metaskills of collaborative inquiry are proposed to address commitment to collective, object-orienentated, and prolonged inquiry efforts, which are not reducible to individual productions. We suggest that these skills are triggered by practices where students are responsible for coordinating and directing their activities over different aspects of inquiry: own individual efforts, effective collaboration in group, and the "well-being" of the knowledge objects they are developing. To examine these hypotheses, we studied a multidisciplinary course on distributed project management. Forty-seven students took part in the course, organized into ten teams. The teams worked on authentic problems from a client organization, and they had to take, very concretely, the responsibility of advancing their work. Based on the team interviews half-way through the course, the student were rather confused and even distressed with the open-ended assignment and with managing team activities. At the end of the course, their self-reflections revealed a change to more positive evaluations of the value of such open-ended assignment. Findings of the study suggest that the metaskills of collaborative object-oriented inquiry need to deal with the strategies and efforts that are helpful in getting the inquiry going and improving the objects, despite difficulties and controversies.