

Yrjö Engeström



Biography

Yrjö Engeström was born 1948 in Lahti, Finland. In 1987, at the age of 39, he received his PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Helsinki. Engeström is a professor of Adult Education and Director of the Center for Research on Activity, Development and learning (CRADLE) at the University of Helsinki and is also a professor of Communication at the University of California, San Diego. He also received honorary professorship from University of Birmingham in UK and an honorary doctorate from University of Oslo in Norway (Glăveanu & Engeström, 2012).

Yrjö Engeström is known for his theory of Expansive Learning. His work uses the framework of cultural-historical activity to explore transformations in work places and organizations, combining micro level analysis of dialogue and interaction with historical analysis and modeling of organizations (Creanova Conference, 2011).

Important Publications

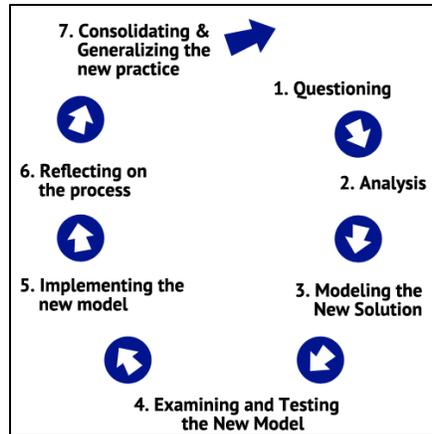
[Learning by expanding. An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research](#) (1987) 3674 Citations

[Activity theory and individual and social transformation](#) (1999) 2027 Citations

[Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization](#) (2001) 1812 Citations

Expansive Learning

“Standard theories of learning often assume that there is a competent ‘teacher’ who knows what is to be learned. The problem is that much of the most intriguing kinds of learning in work organizations violates this presupposition. People and organizations are all the time learning something that is not stable, not even defined or understood ahead of time. In important transformations of our personal lives and organizational practices, we must learn new forms of activity which are not yet there. They are literally learned as they are being created. There is no competent teacher. Standard learning theories have little to offer if one wants to understand these processes” (Engeström, 2001: 137-138).



(Engeström, 1996)

Expansive learning is “...learning in which the learners are involved in constructing and implementing a radically new, wider and more complex object and concept for their activity” (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

Related Authors

Victor Kaptelinin and Bonnie Nardi: Activity Theory and Interaction Design.

Susanne Bodker: Through the Interface - A Human Activity Approach to User Interface Design

Geraldine Gay and Helen Hembrooke: An Ecological Approach to Designing Smart Tools and Usable Systems

Engeström is related to these authors in that the theory of expansive learning contributes to the focus of context-based design, or the understanding of what users actually do and not just what they are assumed to do.

References

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