

STUDIES IN EXPANSIVE LEARNING

Professor Engeström's exciting approach sees expansive learning as the central mechanism of transformation in societal practices and institutions. For researchers and practitioners in education, this book provides a conceptual and practical toolkit for creating and analyzing expansive learning processes with the help of interventions in workplaces, schools and communities.

Chapters 1–3 situate the theory of expansive learning in the field of learning sciences. Chapters 4–8 contain empirical studies of expansive learning in various organizational settings (banks, schools, hospitals, etc.). In Chapters 9–10, the author looks at new challenges and possibilities arising from rapidly spreading “wildfire” activities (e.g., disaster relief) and from the methodology of formative interventions aimed at triggering and supporting expansive learning. This book provides an integrative account of recent empirical studies and conceptual developments in the theory of expansive learning, and serves as a companion volume to *Learning by Expanding*.

YRJÖ ENGESTRÖM is Professor of Adult Education and Director of the Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning (CRADLE) at the University of Helsinki. He is also Professor Emeritus of Communication at the University of California, San Diego. Engeström applies and develops cultural-historical activity theory as a framework for the study of transformations and learning processes in work activities and organizations. He is widely known for his theory of expansive learning and for the interventionist methodology of developmental work research. His most recent books include *From Teams to Knots: Activity-Theoretical Studies of Collaboration and Learning at Work* and *Learning by Expanding: An Activity-Theoretical Approach to Developmental Research*.

Studies in Expansive Learning

LEARNING WHAT IS NOT YET THERE

Yrjö Engeström

University of Helsinki



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PREFACE

Since its formulation, the theory of expansive learning (Engeström, 1987) has generated growing interest among scholars and practitioners (Roth & Lee, 2007). As the original presentation of the theory has been long out of print, Cambridge University Press decided to publish a re-edition of *Learning by Expanding*, with a comprehensive new introduction.

A complex theory is made alive by its empirical applications and further conceptual and methodological developments. This book presents a representative set of such work which I have conducted together with my colleagues and students. It might be read and used as a companion volume and substantive extension to the new edition of *Learning by Expanding*.

This book has ten chapters which can be divided into three major components. The first three chapters situate the theory of expansive learning in the field of the learning sciences (Chapter 1), elaborate on the characteristics of this approach as a process theory of learning (Chapter 2) and review studies of expansive learning conducted in different parts of the world (Chapter 3). The second component, Chapters 4–8, contains empirical studies of expansive learning in various organizational settings. These include a bank, a high-tech manufacturing company and a primary care health center (Chapter 4), a middle school (Chapter 5), the surgical operating unit of a hospital (Chapter 6), a university library (Chapter 7) and again two primary care health centers (Chapter 8). The third component of the book contains the last two chapters, devoted to new challenges and possibilities arising from loosely bounded and rapidly spreading “wildfire activities” (Chapter 9) and from the methodology of formative interventions aimed at triggering and supporting expansive learning (Chapter 10).

Each chapter contains conceptual or methodological developments aimed at enriching and pushing forward the theory of expansive learning.

Together these ideas form a roadmap for traveling in the zone of proximal development of this approach.

Chapter 1 was written for this book. The other chapters are based on articles published in 2007 or later. I was the sole or first author of each one of these articles. I have modified them for the book so as to avoid repetition, to update references and – when needed – to create bridges between the chapters.

Chapter 2 was originally published as Engeström & Sannino (2012). Chapter 3 was originally published as Engeström & Sannino (2010). Chapter 4 was originally published as Engeström (2007a). Chapter 5 was originally published as Engeström (2009a). Chapter 6 was originally published as Engeström et al. (2010). Chapter 7 was originally published as Engeström, Rantavuori & Kerosuo (2013). Chapter 8 was originally published as Engeström, Kerosuo & Kajamaa (2007). Chapter 9 was originally published as Engeström (2009b). Chapter 10 was originally published as Engeström (2011).

I gratefully acknowledge the significant contributions of my co-authors, Annalisa Sannino (Chapters 2 and 3), Anu Kajamaa (Chapters 6 and 8), Hannele Kerosuo (Chapters 6, 7 and 8), Päivi Laurila (Chapter 6) and Juhana Rantavuori (Chapter 7). Annalisa, Anu, Hannele and Juhana are members of the Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning (CRADLE) at the University of Helsinki; Päivi is a physician at the Oulu University Hospital, an organization with which CRADLE has a long-standing, collaborative relationship.

The CRADLE community and the international network of colleagues working with cultural-historical activity theory have been decisive for the continuing development and implementation of the theory of expansive learning reported in this book.

I dedicate this book to Annalisa and Jurij Enzo.