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Cultural Historical Activity Theory-related research

My work with CHAT reflects concerns for the role of learning and pedagogy in realising meaningful, positive change. To me, this brings agency into central focus. In parallel – and increasing dialogue – with CHAT, I have drawn on practice theories, particularly the Theory of Practice Architectures with these same concerns in mind. My empirical work has generally related to workplace learning, professional learning, and how parents can be supported when faced with challenges caring for young children. Methodologically, I am increasingly turning to action and activist approaches, including formative interventions, but am also interested in learning from

change that is effected in everyday life outside of researcher involvement. My CHAT-related work currently relates to:

1. Changing the lives of families with children who tube feed

This collaboration through the SUCCEED Child Feeding Alliance involves families, clinicians and academics working together to promote holistic thriving and inclusion for child who tube feed and their families. We work with healthcare services, communities, and advocate for change in healthcare policy and research agendas in this important but neglected area. As part of this, I have explored agency as families shift from surviving to coping to thriving, and as children are enabled to transition from tube feeding to oral feeding. An emerging focus here lies on the importance of play and a more philosophical investigation of agency as it pertains to the actions of even very young and seemingly dependent children.

2. A suite of Change Laboratories in a school

I was invited by a school in Sydney to conduct a suite of Change Laboratories addressing diverse aspects of schooling. These have proved productive but also unruly as the school itself pursues significant change on multiple fronts simultaneously. This is also leading to some necessary but interesting methodological adaptations. Through this work I am particularly interested in concept formation, germ cells, and aspects of the Transformative Agency by Double Stimulation (TADS; Sannino) framework.

3. Fostering change in education in the Himalayas

A past and ongoing project have involved collaborating with teachers and teacher educators from Nepal and Bhutan. These heavily adapted formative interventions seek impactful yet feasible change in these challenging educational environments, promoting inclusive pedagogies. The current project looks to apply principles from CHAT while also engaging with Nepali and Bhutanese cultural concepts.

Thinking toward the future, I am keen to continue work on agency, using multiple frameworks and furthering my ideas about agency as concerning the direction and reach of actions. Given the highly

charged nature of my work with families with children who tube feed, I feel I must also confront issues of affect, and perhaps re-turn to some of my earlier work on embodiment. I am also interested in developing post-abysal dialogue, and how CHAT might continue to be enriched, and our change efforts strengthened, by engaging with other knowledges, particularly those from Eastern and Latin American traditions.

References

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