

# Radical Local Teaching and Learning

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Cultural-historical psychology was formulated originally by Vygotsky in relation to the idea that practice was the center from which psychological phenomena could be understood. One of the challenges in realising this idea is understanding how to formulate analytic approaches that have practice as an integral part of the analysis. In relation to educational interventions for school-aged children, the idea of radical-local teaching and learning, formulated with Mariane Hedegaard, provides a general principle for conceptualising the relation between children's life practices and the content of educational practices. The main problem in a radical-local perspective is how one can engage children with subject-matter knowledge, which reflects the historical accumulation of concepts and procedures that have been found to be important and useful in life practices, in a way that draws connections to their life situations. This general principle is motivated by the idea that knowledge is part of life practices, and the purpose of formal education should be to help children develop the capability to critically analyse their life conditions. The specific implementation of this idea is further elaborated using Vygotsky's distinction between everyday and scientific concepts. To work in a radical-local way requires both a theoretical understanding of subject-matter concepts, a historical understanding of children's life conditions, an analytic understanding of how to understand these historical conditions in subject-matter terms, and a practical understanding of how to create tasks that give the possibility for children to develop their theoretical understanding. The radical-local perspective is applicable for all children, regardless of their majority or minority status in a particular society. At the same time, it provides a way to both acknowledge specific cultural and historical characteristics without making them the defining foundation for educational planning. The radical-local perspective is a practice that depends on institutional structures to support this kind of thinking and working, rather than a specific set of techniques to be implemented. The ideal formulation of radical-local teaching does not address the practical problems of having institutional conditions for working in this way. The realisation of this practice is likely to require other strategies that lie beyond the idea of radical local.