

## **Toward a wholeness approach to the study of children's development**

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Trying to surpass a functional description of children's development I have worked with formulating a cultural historical methodology that integrates the child's perspective and the perspective of the social situation. In this effort I have been inspired by Lev Vygotsky's cultural historical approach but also by Alfred Schutz phenomenological approach to the study of the sociology of everyday life. Both Vygotsky and Schutz emphasize that there is a crucial difference between everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge. Not that they can be understood independent of each other since they are dialectically related and has to be seen as defining each other. Vygotsky characterize the scientific knowledge as systematic, Schutz defines scientific knowledge as rational in a way close to Vygotsky characterisation. But what Schutz also point out is that an intentional realisation of a person's projects is the core in understanding human's development of knowledge; this is a way to conceptualise personality development that is close to A. N. Leontiev's theory of motives as the core in human development.

If one want wholeness in the methodological approach to study children's development then it is important to include the different project that children participate in. This means that one also have to take the different perspectives on a child's social situation. It is through the coordination of perspectives of the different projects in a person's social situation and their variations that one can get a view into the dynamic of a person activity in his/her everyday life. A person's project is the entrance to a conception of wholeness of a person's psychic development, where the societal condition for the institutional practice in which the child participate also is included. A methodology in which one takes the child's perspective implies much more than a phenomenological approach it also implies a study of the institutional and societal conditions for the projects that the child takes part in and how these projects become appropriated or by the child. So when we want to study children we have to study children's intentional activity, the practice of the institutions with focus especially at the aim of these practices and from this interpret what is the children's project's and which conditions do these project's have.

G. W. F. Hegel, Max Wartofsky, Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, Lev Vygotsky, Vladislav Lektorsky, Vasily Davydov and several other researchers within the historical tradition have discussed how a wholeness approach to the study of humans is possible. My approach is to follow these theoreticians where it especially has been Vygotsky's formulation of wholeness in his approach to the study of children's cognition that I have followed. The conception one find in these theoreticians' work is that research about the object can never be separated from the subject neither in everyday life activities, nor in research projects. The subject and object defines each other. In the cultural historical theory there have been especially weight put on this relation as a mediated relation. The mediation has to be seen as an educational process where tools and procedures in all their variations are important mediators as well as the child's activity and his/her reflection over this relation.