

## Keynote/Invited Talks Abstract (ISCAR 2008 in UCSD)

### Zone of Proximal Development as negotiating space: Microanalysis of the activity of disciplining in child care

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#### Abstract

In this talk I will discuss teaching-learning as the negotiating of space in the activity of disciplining in a child care center. Discipline is an essential aspect of human social life, which is seemingly transmitted from adults to children. Only human transmits knowledge or skills constructed by the preceding generations in the form of “cultural learning” (Tomasello, 1999). Thus, transmission of culture in human society is supported by the teaching-learning processes between adults and children.

In the context of subject content learning Vygotsky (1978) proposed the concept of “zone of proximal development” as the collaborative space between a learner and more capable others: between the learner’s current level of performance and the same learner’s performance in the near future. This idea was applied by later researchers as “scaffolding” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) or “reciprocal teaching” (Brown, Ash, Rutherford, Nakagawa, Gordon, & Campione, 1993). This group of researchers focused on identifying effective conditions to open the *zone* and promote their learner’s internalization in the academic subject’s domains. From their standpoint, learners do not have space for negotiation concerning what should be learned; learners are passive recipients of knowledge and skills.

*Discipline* etymologically refers to an act of training disciples, often the unconscious physical act of training one how to behave. It is a seemingly-passive act for those who have been disciplined to assimilate into the norms of their society. However, my analysis of micro-interaction in the activity of disciplining in a child care center revealed children’s dexterous “*tactiques* (tactics)” (Certeau, 1990). In the guided participatory occasions I analyzed, including mealtimes with caring and collective behavior, children were changing the rules and the meanings given by a teacher, while at the same time collaborating with them. I will conclude this talk by discussing the implications of conceptualizing the zone of proximal development as a space for negotiation.

#### Reference List

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