**Kingsborough Center for Teaching and Learning**

**Faculty Interest Group**

**Valuing Students’ Voices to Make Assessment Meaningful**

**Fall 2019 Session 2**

**10/31/19**

Project Updates and Plans

Exploring Theory: For meaningful assessment-in-community, what theoretical framework(s) might we “hang our investigative hats onto”?

1. Approach used Kahn, Calienes, & Thompson (2016): Sociocultural Theory

*Drawing upon Marxian principles in post-revolutionary Russia, Vygotsky’s*

*research explored the social origin of the human mind. His central insight was that*

*human mental processes are mediated by our engagement with culturally*

*produced sign systems, including oral and written language. It is through our*

*relationships with other people and cultural artifacts—our “lived experiences”*

*(Moll, 2014)—that Vygotsky believed our intellectual capacities take shape. In*

*this view, a learner’s environment is not just a setting for development, but rather*

*its very foundation.*

*Vygotsky’s genetic law of cultural development states: “every function in*

*the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later,*

*on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside*

*the child (intrapsychological)” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Internalization is*

*therefore understood to be gradual process whereby activity on the external plane*

*becomes transformed as new knowledge inside a learner. This process does not*

*occur in a linear or measured fashion but rather is believed to evolve*

*unpredictably and dynamically—“the result of a long series of developmental*

*events” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). From a sociocultural perspective, humans’ use of*

*language not only allows individuals to construct meaning jointly, it also serves as*

*a tool for thought as communication becomes internalized, regulating individuals’*

*cognition “through the discourse of inner speech” (Moll, 2014, p. 33). This*

*internal dialogue becomes transformed once again as it is externalized through*

*dialogue in the social sphere. Our voices, thoughts, and actions are seen as*

*mutually constitutive of one another.*

1. Approach used in Calienes (2018):

*Standpoint epistemologists argue that social science is always socially situated. Because of this, it is crucial to pay attention to both the “backstage” of the research process (the researcher’s historical and social positioning) and the “front-stage”, or how this social positionality frames the research process and interpretation (McCorkel and Myers, 2003, p. 205).*

*These processes are necessary to meaningfully interpret any data collected of subjects that are socially and culturally situated differently from the researcher. Yet, none of this self-awareness speaks to the* ***subject’s*** *awareness of the researcher’s positionality and situatedness, and how these may affect her or his ability to gather information that, though not necessarily objective, is meaningful.*

*What are these positionalities that interact between subject and researcher? How do they affect the research process? In my privileged situatedness, my social and interpretive filter is shaded by the master narratives that I, as a person educated in the Western canon, have been repeatedly and consistently subjected to. Awareness of this is obviously important to meaningful interpretation of any collected information. But as the distance between the researcher and the subject shrinks, the subject’s increasing interaction with the master narrative will also affect how they interpret the researcher. As the dialectic fills in, the conversation develops, and a community is built. Both researcher and subject begin to work together to consider and collaborate on interpretations.*

Other possible approaches that honor and provide grounding for the work we do in community?

For Next Time: November 14

Read, and bring your thoughts, and a paragraph or two about a possible theoretical framework you might draw upon for assessment-in-community, to share with the group.