



ISCAR 2026

Central Europe

October 1–2, 2026

Berlin, Germany

DEVELOPMENT, ACCELERATION and ALIENATION

Cultural-historical Activity Research on
Temporality and Intersubjectivity



Registration: <https://hi.converia.de/frontend/index.php?sub=142>



Table of Contents

Overview	2
Development, acceleration and alienation	3
Program Schedule	5
Conference Programme	7
Pre-Conference	12
Abstracts	13
A. Keynote	13
B. Presentations	13
C. Workshops	39
D. Symposium	46
E. Poster	50
Conference Proceedings ISCAR 2026 Berlin	58
Conference Venue	59

Overview

Conference dates	1 – 2 October 2026
Conference venue	Luisenstraße 56, 10117 Berlin-Mitte (Humboldt Graduate School)
Registration	10 March 2026 – 31 July 2026
Paper Submission	10 March 2026 – 15 April 2026
Feedback and Revision	15 May 2026 – 1 June 2026
Acceptance or Rejection	15 June 2026
Conference Proceedings	Publication in late 2027
Conference Homepage	https://hi.converia.de/frontend/index.php?sub=142
Conference Chair	Thomas Hoffmann (HU Berlin)
Organization Team ISCAR Central Europe	Stefanie Müller (HU Berlin), Kathy Wittenberg (Conference Office, HU Berlin), Marco Mazereeuw (NHL Stenden, University of Groningen), Vera Schuurmans (Firda), Loes Meijer (UMC Utrecht), Jan Steffens (Universität Bremen), Monique Verhoeven (Utrecht University).
Conference Office	Kathy Wittenberg, E-Mail: ISCAR2026@hu-berlin.de

Development, acceleration and alienation.

Cultural-historical Activity Research on Temporality and Intersubjectivity

Humboldt University of Berlin, October 1-2, 2026

Development is movement and therefore takes time. It unfolds both individually and socially, at different speeds and against different temporal horizons. Lev S. Vygotsky's theory of development and his concept of the zone of proximal development emphasize the importance of intersubjectivity, learning and education as a “motor” for human development. Cultural and social developments – from the early forms of shared affects, through the emergence of spoken language and written symbols, to networked communication with digital media and AI – contribute to the acceleration of the activity systems in which we think, feel and act.

At the same time, as sociologist Hartmut Rosa has pointed out, modern subjects increasingly experience the growing acceleration of social life driven by new technologies, the economy, and social change as forms of alienation and isolation. If, however, human development is to succeed as a prerequisite for a good life, it requires experiences of intersubjectivity as meaningful spaces of resonance. In view of a highly automated social world in which countless interactions take place simultaneously, communication and decisions are optimized by algorithms, and everyone and everything appears constantly accessible and available, several questions arise: How much acceleration can development tolerate? What is the current relationship between individual and social development processes? How can the counterforces of deceleration and resonance be strengthened? Against this background, the conference will examine the relationship between temporality and intersubjectivity.

Possible topics and questions regarding current research on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), include:

- **Temporality and intersubjectivity** in individual and social development
- Development of and through **social participation**
- **Development and intersubjectivity** in cultural-historical contexts
- **Learning and development** in accelerated activity systems
- Development under **alienated and alienating conditions**
- CHAT perspectives on **social acceleration and alienation**
- The **significance of AI** for cognitive and emotional development

This conference is primarily intended to promote exchange between researchers in Central Europe whose work and publications deal with the approach of cultural-historical and activity-theoretical research. However, interested people and colleagues with other research interests and from other regions are also welcome! The first question when submitting contributions should therefore be: **What would you like to discuss with your audience?**

Submission formats:

- **Posters:** Discuss your ongoing research project or study in the Poster Session. Each presenter will be offered a maximum of 5 minutes to present their poster. Afterwards the posters could be discussed during the open space.
- **Presentations:** Share the results of a project (theoretical, empirical, methodological) with the conference participants. In 30 Minutes there is time for your presentation (20 Minutes) and discussion (10 Minutes).
- **Workshops:** Interact with your colleagues and work together on the results of a project. You have a total of 30 minutes, including 5 minutes of a brief introduction followed by a 25-minute collaboration phase.
- **Symposium:** A symposium consists of up to 3 presentations on a common topic, presented by researchers from at least two different institutions (within the same or from different countries). A total of 90 minutes are available.

The programme includes a pre-conference session for participants who are not yet familiar with Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), a keynote address by Sanne Akkerman, a symposium, 46 further contributions (workshops, presentations and posters) by more than 70 participants from 14 different countries.

The registration fee (€ 260,- regular rate; € 160,- reduced) covers attendance at the conference (including the pre-conference, if applicable), coffee/tea/drinks and snack breaks during the conference, as well as attendance at the evening reception on the first day of the conference, featuring drinks and finger food.

Organization Team ISCAR Central Europe: Thomas Hoffmann (Conference Chair, HU Berlin), Stefanie Müller (HU Berlin), Kathy Wittenberg (Conference Office), Marco Mazereeuw (NHL Stenden, University of Groningen), Vera Schuurmans (Firda), Loes Meijer (UMC Utrecht), Jan Steffens (Universität Bremen), Monique Verhoeven (Utrecht University).



ISCAR | International Society
for Cultural-historical
Activity Research

ISCAR – International Society for Cultural-historical Activity Research is a global organization that brings together scholars and practitioners across disciplines and walks of life, engaged in just transitions to sustain life on the planet. It fosters the century-old tradition of cultural-historical and activity-theoretical research in diverse settings, work and communities (<https://iscar.org>).

Program Schedule

1 Oct 2026

09:00-12:00	Pre-Conference		
12:00-13:00	Break		
13:00-14:00	Registration		
14:00-14:30	Welcome (Ballroom) – Thomas Hoffmann (Humboldt University of Berlin)		
14:30-15:30	Keynote (Ballroom) – Sanne Akkerman (Utrecht University)		
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break		
16:00-17:30	Parallel Session A1 (R144) <i>Methodological Aspects:</i> 4855 Menno Wierdsma 4860 Ines Langemeyer 4866 José Middendorp	Parallel Session A2 (R122) <i>Technological Acceleration:</i> 4892 Irina Valentin 4868 María Guadalupe Ramírez, Daniel Hürzeler Judith Hangartner 4896 Daniel Hürzeler, María Guadalupe Ramírez, Judith Hangartner	Parallel Session A3 (R220) <i>Education & Empowerment:</i> 4863 Pauliina Rantavuori, Yrjö Engeström 4871 Nynke Anna Varkevisser 4870 Mayke Vereijken, Jereon Vermeulen, Sanne Akkerman
17:30-18:00	Coffee Break		
18:00-21:00	Poster Walk (Ballroom): 4844 Ruth Frans, Lysanne te Brinke, Arjen de Vetten, 4849 Arjen de Vetten, Marije Schneider, Indira Day, 4852 Ilona van Heijst, 4875 Georgios Koutsogiannis, Manolis Dafermos, 4880 Bianca Dusseljee, 4888 & 4889 Benjamin Roth Open Space & Evening Reception (Ballroom)		

Room allocation:

- Ballroom: Welcome/Farewell, Keynote, Poster Walk, Open Space, Evening Reception, Symposium B4
- Room 144: Parallel Sessions A1, B1, C1, D1
- Room 122: Parallel Sessions A2, B2, C2, D2
- Room 220: Parallel Sessions A3, B3, C3, D3

2 Oct 2026

08:30-09:00	Welcome 2 nd Day			
09:00-10:30	Parallel Session B1 (R144) <i>Youth & Adolescence:</i> 4843 Marijn Neuman-Sjonger, Marco Mazereeuw, Monique Volman 4867 Paula Ahola, Antti Rajala, Anna Stetsenko 4872 Indy Joosten, Sanne Akkerman, Monique Volman, Monique Verhoeven	Parallel Session B2 (R122) <i>Cultural Tools:</i> 4840 Galina Novikova 4882 Giliian Horribine 4853 Menno Wierdsma	Parallel Session B3 (R220) <i>Acceleration & Learning:</i> 4891 Daniele Morselli, Beate Weyland, 4847 Annalisa Ventrella, Maria Beatrice Ligorio 4890 Peter Rödler	Parallel Session B4 (Ballroom) Symposium: <i>Meaning & Alienation in Soviet CHAT:</i> 4878 Sascha Freyberg 4877 Ketj Chukrov 4873 Lena Kreymann
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break			
11:00-12:30	Parallel Session C1 (R144) <i>Change Laboratories:</i> 4881 Brett Bligh, 4858 Marije Schneider, Arjen de Vetten 4854 Rene Streutker, Thomas Teekens, Siebrich de Vries, Marco Mazereeuw	Parallel Session C2 (R122) <i>Alienation & Marginalization:</i> 4885 Naisan Raji 4851 Stefan Schuster 4883 Christel Manske	Parallel Session C3 (R220) <i>School & Teaching:</i> 4850 Monique Volman 4846 Gülsüm Arserim 4856 Fardau Visser	
12:30-13:00	Snack Break			
13:00-14:30	Parallel Session D1 (R144) <i>Transformation Agency:</i> 4864 Arum Nisma Wulanjani, 4848 Monique Verhoeven, Milou Munsters, Marije van Braak, Kila van der Starre, Ralph Meulenbroeks, Jimmy van Rijt, Marijke de Belder 4842 Tammo Breedveld	Parallel Session D2 (R122) <i>Inequality:</i> 4861 Vincent Grosstephan, Eva Werndorfer, Christine Felix, Yannick Lémonie 4876 Stefanie Schmachtel 4859 Albert Walsweer, Frans Hiddink	Parallel Session D3 (R220) <i>Teacher Agency:</i> 4857 Adriaan H.L. Walpot, Larike Bronkhorst, Monika Louws, Jan van Tartwijk 4874 Arda Oosterhoff	
14:30-15:00	Review, Outlook, Farewell			

Conference Programme

Time	1 Oct 2026	Room
09:00-12:00	Monique Verhoeven (Utrecht University), Vera Schuurmans (Firda): Pre-Conference	Ballroom
12:00-13:00	Break	
13:00-14:00	Registration	Foyer
14:00-14:30	Thomas Hoffmann (Humboldt University of Berlin): Welcome	Ballroom
14:30-15:30	Sanne Akkerman (Utrecht University): Keynote	Ballroom
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break	Banquet Hall
16:00-17:30	Parallel Sessions I (A1-A3)	
16:00-17:30	A1 Methodological Aspects	R144
	4855 – Menno Wierdsma (Firda, Zuidlaren): <i>A CL with a heterogenous coalition of education institutes and circular businesses: how to use mirror data to invite participants into analyzing their activity systems? (Workshop)</i>	
	4860 – Ines Langemeyer (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology): <i>What are holistic explanations – advantages and critique</i>	
	4866 – José Middendorp (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): <i>On phenomenology and cultural-historical (activity) theory (Workshop)</i>	
16:00-17:30	A2 Technological Acceleration	R122
	4892 – Irina Valentin (KINERGIA International Institute of Resilience and Human Development, Toronto): <i>Acceleration Without Inheritance: AI, Development, and Alienation in Activity Systems</i>	
	4868 – Maria Guadalupe Ramirez, Daniel Hürzeler, Judith Hangartner (PH Bern): <i>Strategies for activating expansive learning in the context of technology-led acceleration (Workshop)</i>	
	4896 – Daniel Hürzeler, María Guadalupe Ramírez, Judith Hangartner (PH Bern): <i>Platform-driven acceleration of activity systems in Swiss primary schools (Workshop)</i>	

16:00-17:30	A3 Education & Empowerment	R220
	4863 – Paulina Rantavuori (Tampere University), Yrjö Engeström (University of Helsinki): <i>What Can School Give? Empowering Students to Take Ownership of Their Own Learning</i>	
	4871 – Nynke Anna Varkevisser (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): <i>School advisers crossing boundaries between policy and school practice</i>	
	4870 – Mayke Vereijken, Jereon Vermeulen, Sanne Akkerman (Utrecht University): <i>University education in and with the world: Transformative processes in Community Engaged Education</i>	
17:30-18:00	Coffee Break	Banquet Hall
18:00-21:00	Poster Walk	Ballroom
	4844 – Ruth Frans (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Lysanne te Brinke (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Arjen de Vetten (Leiden University): <i>Between performance and meaningful development: reframing the object of schooling through a Change Laboratory</i>	
	4849 – Arjen de Vetten, Marije Schneider, Indira Day (Leiden University): <i>Centuries old and still going strong? Transforming a large bachelor of law curriculum using a Change Laboratory</i>	
	4852 – Ilona van Heijst (University of Amsterdam): <i>Deceleration in accelerated school activity systems: Towards a conceptualization of inquiry and change through CHAT</i>	
	4875 – Georgios Koutsogiannis, Maolis Dafermos (University of Crete): <i>Psychological Systems and Adolescence: Rethinking Personality Development Dialectically within Cultural-Historical Theory</i>	
	4880 – Bianca Dusseljee (Firda, Leeuwarden): <i>A joint project of becoming – Guiding professional development in situations of uncertainty and transformation</i>	
	4888 – Benjamin Roth (Goethe University Frankfurt): <i>How AI affects us cognitively and socially – a literary study about Dietmar Dath</i>	
	4889 – Benjamin Roth (Goethe University Frankfurt): <i>Learning and Development in today's German highschoools – a case study about acceleration, alienation, AI and participation</i>	
	4880 – Bianca Dusseljee (Firda, Leeuwarden): <i>A joint project of becoming – Guiding professional development in situations of uncertainty and transformation</i>	
18:00-21:00	Open Space & Evening Reception	Ballroom

Time	2 Oct 2026	Room
08:30-09:00	Welcome 2nd Day	Ballroom
09:00-10:30	Parallel Sessions II (B1-B4)	
09:00-10:30	B1 Youth & Adolescence	R144
	4843 – Marijn Neuman-Sjonger (Firda Leeuwarden), Marco Mazereeuw (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences), Monique Volman (University of Amsterdam): <i>Coaching Young Adults from Vulnerability to Vocation: Double Stimulation in Practice</i>	
	4867 – Paula Ahola, Antti Rajala (University of Helsinki), Anna Stetsenko (City University of New York): <i>"Now, now, now!": climate crisis, young people and agency in the collision of temporalities</i>	
	4872 – Indy Joosten (University of Amsterdam), Sanne Akkerman, Monique Volman, Monique Verhoeven (Utrecht University): <i>Qualities of adolescents' out-of-school interest-based learning processes: a literature review</i>	
09:00-10:30	B2 Cultural Tools	R122
	4840 – Galina Novikova (Alferov Federal State Budgetary Institution of Higher Education and Science Saint Petersburg National Research Academic University of the Russian Academy of Sciences): <i>Comics as Cultural Tools for Mediating Learning Tasks: Temporality and Intersubjectivity in Developmental Instruction</i>	
	4882 – Gillian Horribine (University of Dundee): <i>Tuning in to Development: Exploring Podcast Learning as a Tool for Professional Community Through a CHAT Lens (Workshop)</i>	
	4853 – Menno Wierdsma (Firda, Zuidlaren): <i>Artful play for transformation: An exploration of how arts and play may be employed to share transformative episodes and invite others in taking a transformative activist stance (Workshop)</i>	
09:00-10:30	B3 Acceleration & Learning	R220
	4891 – Daniele Morselli, Beate Weyland (Free University of Bolzano): <i>Implementing a New Model in an Accelerated Activity System: Expansive Learning and the Role of Newcomers in a Kindergarten After a Change Laboratory</i>	
	4847 – Annalisa Ventrella, Maria Beatrice Ligorio (University of Bari Aldo Moro): <i>Using AI to study: A Codebook to explore the dimensions involved</i>	
	4890 – Peter Rödler (Universität Koblenz): <i>Acceleration or Stagnation – Theses on the 'End of History'</i>	

09:00-10:30	B4 Symposium: Meaning & Alienation in Soviet CHAT	Ballroom
	4878 – Sascha Freyberg (University of Hamburg): <i>Abstraction, Play and Alienation: A Historical-Epistemological Reading of the Soviet Activity Approach</i>	
	4877 – Ketī Chukhrov (Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design): <i>Disalienation: Vygotsky's Enigma of Internal Speech as Thought without Language</i>	
	4873 – Lena Kreymann (Berlin): <i>The psychological catastrophe and how to escape it: (Inter)subjectivity, sense, and meaning in Leontiev</i>	
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break	Banquet Hall
11:00-12:30	Parallel Sessions III (C1-C3)	
11:00-12:30	C1 Change Laboratories	R144
	4881 – Brett Bligh (Lancaster University): <i>Developing Expansive Learning in Doctoral Education: Online Change Laboratory Projects-in-Miniature</i>	
	4858 – Marije Schneider, Arjen de Vetten (Leiden University): <i>Shortened Change Laboratories, Limited Transformation?</i>	
	4854 – Rene Streutker, Siebrich de Vries, Marco Mazereeuw (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences & University of Groningen), Thomas Teekens (University of Groningen): <i>Combining Mixed Method Social Network Analysis and CHAT to better understand Change Labs and their interaction with the broader surrounding organization</i>	
11:00-12:30	C2 Alienation & Marginalization	R122
	4885 – Naisan Raji (Haus der Volksarbeit e.V., Frankfurt am Main): <i>"This could just as well be Section 35a" - Legalistic fragmentation and alienation in child and youth welfare</i>	
	4851 – Stefan Schuster (University of Erfurt): <i>Alienation and Development. An Attempt to Intertwine the Concept of Alienation with Cultural-Historical Theory</i>	
	4883 – Christel Manske (Hamburg): <i>The significance of Vygotsky's approach to children's development and learning</i>	
11:00-12:30	C3 School & Teaching	R220
	4850 – Monique Volman (University of Amsterdam): <i>Learning to contribute to a better future; how schools can support young people's transformative agency</i>	
	4846 – Gülsüm Arserim (Hakkari University): <i>Teaching in Bilingual Classrooms: An Examination of Pre-Service Teachers' Classroom Experiences in The Context Of Perezhivanie</i>	
	4856 – Fardau Visser (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): <i>Tensions in the Enactment of Minority Language Education Policy</i>	
12:30-13:00	Snack Break	Banquet Hall

13:00-14:30	Parallel Sessions IV (D1-D3)	
13:00-14:30	D1 Transformation Agency	R144
	4864 – Arum Nisma Wulanjani (University of Sydney): <i>Collective Development of Teaching Practice in Teacher Education: A Change Laboratory Intervention in Transforming Activity Systems</i>	
	4848 – Monique Verhoeven, Milou Munsters, Marije van Braak, Kila van der Starre, Ralph Meulenbroeks, Jimmy van Rijt, Marijke de Belder (Utrecht University): <i>How to diminish teacher shortages in secondary education? Exploring the role of undergraduate programs in promoting or discouraging the teaching profession.</i>	
	4842 – Tammo Breedveld (Amsterdam): <i>Why CHAT's Best-Kept Secret Stays Secret: The Material Conceptual Contradiction in Activity Theory's Tools</i>	
13:00-14:30	D2 Inequality	R122
	4861 – Vincent Grosstephan, Eva Werndorfer, Christine Felix (Aix-Marseille Université), Yannick Lémonie (CRTD - CNAM Paris): <i>Acting Without a Clear Object : Frontline work in Educational Inequality</i>	
	4876 – Stefanie Schmachtel (Martin-Luther-University of Halle & IU Frankfurt am Main): <i>Collective agency and development in a governmentally funded research-practice-partnership: an ideology-critical analysis</i>	
	4859 – Albert Walsweer, Frans Hiddink (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): <i>The impact of a multi-layer curriculum transformation: from policy implementation to policy enactment</i>	
13:00-14:30	D3 Teacher Agency	R220
	4857 - Adriaan H.L. Walpot (Utrecht University), Larike Bronkhorst, Monika Louws, Jan van Tartwijk (De Werkplaats Kindergemeenschap): <i>Students and teachers regaining trust and meaning in schooling activity through Transformative Agency.</i>	
	4874 – Arda Oosterhoff (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): <i>Teacher agency in an automated social world: what might that look like?</i>	
14:30-15:00	Review, Outlook, Farewell	Ballroom

Pre-Conference

1 Oct 2026, 9:00-12:00, Luisenstr. 56, Meeting point: Ballroom

The pre-conference offers an introductory and orienting space for participants who are new to Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), including practitioners, doctoral candidates, early-career researchers and other scholars new to this perspective. Participants with more experience in CHAT are welcome to join us too to share their knowledge and experience.

The pre-conference will start with getting to know one another. Next, you can join various thematic groups to exchange ideas, discuss questions, and engage with ISCAR researchers who will facilitate these sessions.

Themes of the thematic groups include:

1. Units of analyses (the 'generations' of CHAT)
2. Development as historically situated, relational, and contradictory
3. Meanings, identities, and roles as socially and temporally constructed
4. Intersubjectivity as a foundational concept in CHAT
5. Change Laboratories

Between the thematic sessions, participants will have opportunities to exchange insights and questions with people who joined other groups. This will allow ideas to travel across themes and create opportunities for collective learning and new connections.

We will close the pre-conference with a short networking activity designed to help you connect with peers and build relationships that can continue throughout the main conference.

Coordination: Monique Verhoeven () & Vera Schuurmans ()

Abstracts

We have included the submitted abstracts here, sorted by presentation type (A. Keynote, B. Presentations, C. Workshops, D. Symposium, E. Poster) and ID number (48xx). Due to limitations in space, we have had to shorten some of the texts slightly and have omitted the references.

A. Keynote: Sanne Akkerman (Utrecht University)

Sanne Akkerman works as a Professor of Education and Learning Sciences in the Department of Education at Utrecht University. Her research focuses on how education and scientific practices can relate to an ever-changing society, including at the individual level of the diverse learning, working, and living environments in which students and professionals find themselves. The challenge that many practices and people face is often described internationally by the term "boundary crossing." She wrote a dissertation on this topic (2006, cum laude) and two literature reviews (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Bronkhorst & Akkerman, 2016), in which she mapped out the nature of the challenge, effective strategies, and learning outcomes of boundary crossing in education, science, and work. Her empirical research often focuses on students and professionals who are particularly confronted with multiple perspectives and forms of participation, such as in dual or multidisciplinary programs, academic roles, regional or international projects, and partnerships.

Homepage: <https://www.uu.nl/staff/SFAkkerman>

B. Presentations

4840 – Galina Novikova (Alferov Federal State Budgetary Institution of Higher Education and Science Saint Petersburg National Research Academic University of the Russian Academy of Sciences): Comics as Cultural Tools for Mediating Learning Tasks: Temporality and Intersubjectivity in Developmental Instruction

This paper examines how interactive narrative comics can function as cultural tools that mediate learning tasks and support conceptual learning in foreign language education. The study builds on research conducted in Russia within the tradition of developmental instruction developed by Daniil Elkonin and Vasily Davydov. The work presented here grows out of a doctoral research project conducted by Galina A. Novikova under the supervision of Vasily Davydov, which explored the possibility of organizing the study of English grammar in primary school through learning tasks.

Developmental instruction has been successfully implemented in subjects such as mathematics and native language education, where the curriculum allows for systematic conceptual development. However, the situation in foreign language education is different. English, as a second language taught in primary school, is primarily oriented toward communicative practice, while grammar traditionally serves as a supporting tool rather than

the central object of study. These characteristics have made it difficult to implement a full course of basic grammar organized according to the principles of developmental instruction within the standard curriculum. At the same time, the growing acceleration of contemporary educational environments further complicates the possibility of sustained conceptual inquiry in language learning. As a response to these challenges, alternative formats have been explored, including optional courses, extracurricular workshops, and interest-based learning environments where learning tasks could be introduced without the constraints of the standard curriculum.

The current project investigates a new approach based on interactive educational comics designed to present learning tasks through narrative situations. In these comics, fictional characters encounter conceptual problems related to grammatical relations and attempt to solve them through dialogue and reflection. The stories are accompanied by quest-based tasks and assignments that are completed by other students, making this an interactive storytelling environment integrated with developmental instruction. The visual narrative format invites students to participate in the investigation and to reconstruct the learning task. The study examines how such comics mediate the temporality of learning activity and support intersubjective meaning-making. Particular attention is given to two modes of engagement: classroom work with teacher support and independent reading by students.

Analysis of video recordings and diagnostic tasks makes it possible to trace how work with the comic unfolds over time: from the external dialogue of the characters to the internal plane of the student's action. This allows describing the formation of learning activity through concepts such as modelling, materialized action, and reflection. Diagnostic tasks and classroom observations are used to analyze whether children can reconstruct the problem situation and move toward theoretical generalization. The findings suggest that comics can create a shared space for inquiry in which contemporary visual media are combined with the structure of developmental learning tasks. In this way, comics may support forms of conceptual learning that counteract the acceleration of educational processes and foster meaningful intersubjective engagement in foreign language education.

4842 – Tammo Breedveld (Amsterdam): Why CHAT's Best-Kept Secret Stays Secret: The Material|Conceptual Contradiction in Activity Theory's Tools

This paper applies CHAT (Cultural-Historical Activity Theory) reflexively to itself, diagnosing a structural contradiction between CHAT's dialectical conceptual content and the static material forms — triangular diagrams, linear generational labels, fixed terminology — through which it is communicated. For decades, CHAT's leading scholars have issued calls for the field to realize its political and societal potential: Stetsenko (2021) demands transformation of oppressive social relations, Engeström and Sannino (2021) call for temporal processual relations, Langemeyer and Roth (2006) insist on dialectical rigor. Yet alongside these calls, other scholars have identified problems in CHAT's current state: Sannino (2011) voices reification concerns, Langemeyer and Roth (2006) note static representations, Kaptelinin (2005) highlights terminological confusion, and Cong-Lem (2022) documents label divergence. Drawing on the dialectical foundations of activity theory, this paper identifies the material|conceptual contradiction as the primary source of these interconnected field-wide problems.

The material|conceptual contradiction refers to the dialectical tension internal to any tool between its material form and its conceptual content. A calculator's multiplication button is meaningless without the concept of multiplication — yet the concept needs the button to become operable. Without the material reality, the calculator itself does not exist. Tools embody precisely this dialectic — they are never merely physical instruments nor purely conceptual frameworks, but the unity of both. However, these poles can diverge. In CHAT, this divergence has become a contradiction: the field consistently relies on static, fixed, and linear material forms to represent a theory that demands movement, transformation, and dialectical flexibility. The very tools necessary for communicating CHAT simultaneously constrain how it is understood, taught, and applied. Although Engeström emphasized that tools such as the activity system triangle are meant as flexible heuristics, they are often used as fixed analytical instruments, thereby undermining their own conceptual purpose. The triangle represents activity systems as timeless configurations collapsing past, present, and future into a single static snapshot, while terms such as "adopt" imply a linear additive process and framing expansive learning as "a full cycle" implies closure conflicting with the continuous development of activity systems. A tool that can only function correctly when users consciously resist its material affordances is a tool in contradiction with itself.

This primary contradiction propagates into three secondary contradictions. In the contradiction subject|tools, the paper shows that scholars encountering the triangle's visual simplicity correctly interpret its material form — discrete nodes, static arrows, bounded structure — yet this correct interpretation is precisely wrong, leading them to grasp taxonomy where the theory demands dialectics. The material form wins over the conceptual content, producing systematic misappropriation. In subject|community, scholars who discover genuine dialectical insights within their domain — such as the tension between actual and imagined communities in design practice — lack material tools to present these dialectically, and so feel compelled to modify the theory itself, when they could have simply articulated their finding as a manifestation of an already existing dialectic. This creates domain-specific variants that sever their findings from the broader field. The insight is real; the presentation buries it. In object|division-of-labour, CHAT's stated object is macro-level societal transformation, yet its methodology requires convening actors in bounded time and space — a Change Lab demands a room, a schedule, a manageable group. The tools were conceptualized for organizational sciences and structurally cannot scale to political regimes, economic systems, or supranational institutions. The field therefore concentrates where its tools work, systematically abandoning the scale its object demands.

These are not separate issues but manifestations of a single tension actively inhibiting CHAT from realizing its political object. Subsequent work already develops 'flow' as an ontologically primary concept, offering a first concrete step toward the dynamic relational model this paper calls for.

4843 – Marijn Neuman-Sjonger (Firda Leeuwarden), Marco Mazereeuw (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences), Monique Volman (University of Amsterdam): Coaching Young Adults from Vulnerability to Vocation: Double Stimulation in Practice

This paper presentation explores coaching as a developmental and relational practice, drawing on an empirical study of how coaches foster career agency among young adults in vulnerable positions, both within and beyond the Dutch vocational education and training (VET) context (Neuman et al., 2026). Rather than treating career agency as an individual asset, this study understands agency as something that emerges through interaction within relationships and across social, material, and institutional contexts (Muijen et al., 2028). From this perspective, moments of stagnation, indifference, or withdrawal are not viewed as deficits but as signal situations in which possibilities for action are not readily available.

The presentation focuses on how coaches navigate such situations. It builds on empirical research from in-depth interviews with 13 coaches identified by young adults as significant in their development. The interviews explored coaches' experiences supporting career agency, the challenges they faced, and the developmental processes they observed among young adults. Double Stimulation (Sannino, 2015) served as a lens for guiding the analysis and interpreting the emerging themes. The data were analyzed using a phenomenological approach to capture coaches' lived experiences and their subjective meaning-making processes (Van der Meide, 2018).

The findings show that coaching can be understood as a relational process shaped by how coaches act, understand, and position themselves. We refer to this as the three interwoven ways of coaching: the way of intervening, the way of understanding, and the way of being. Within these ways, seven types of interventions were identified, not as prescriptive tools but as expressions of how coaches participate in developmental processes.

This presentation aims to open a theoretical conversation about how coaching can be understood through concepts from the Cultural-Historical traditions. We used Double Stimulation as a lens to interpret how coaches describe their interactions with young adults. At the same time, the data suggest that coaches approach young adults' experiences with care before these experiences can be articulated as a first stimulus, and that potential second stimuli need to be co-created with the young adult. From this perspective, coaching can be understood as a process in which problematic situations are addressed through the co-creation of new meanings. This raises questions about how such processes relate to concepts of subjectivity (Goulart, 2016; Gonzalez Rey, 2017) and to conceptualizations of the Zone of Proximal Development as a shared space for development (Engeström, 1987). This presentation invites discussion of whether and how these concepts can help us better understand coaching as a process in which the coach and the young adult move toward a next step that is not predefined but emerges in interaction. In addition, the analysis suggests that coaching may influence the meanings young adults attach to their prior experiences and, in turn, reshape how they engage with their present experiences.

By bringing these perspectives together, the presentation aims to contribute to discussions within the ISCAR community on agency, development, and guidance, and to create space for dialogue on how coaching practices can be grounded in theory, while acknowledging their

relational and emergent character. The presentation ends with a discussion on the following question: To what extent can double stimulation, subjectivity, and the zone of proximal development be meaningfully integrated to understand coaching practices in which development manifests as shifts in how young adults relate to themselves and their situations?

4846 – Gülsüm Arserim (Hakkari University): Teaching in Bilingual Classrooms: An Examination of Pre-Service Teachers' Classroom Experiences in The Context Of Perezhivanie

In increasingly multicultural and multilingual educational contexts, classrooms have become complex environments where teachers are expected not only to support academic achievement but also to foster meaningful social interactions among students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This complexity is particularly significant for pre-service teachers, whose early experiences play a critical role in shaping professional development and identity formation. This study places perezhivanie at its analytical centre, examining how a pre-service primary school teacher emotionally and cognitively experiences his teaching practices in a multilingual and multicultural classroom, and how these experiences mediate his emerging professional identity.

Perezhivanie — a concept rooted in Vygotsky's later work on child development — refers to the dialectical unity of the person and the environment as it is lived from the inside: the way in which an individual emotionally and cognitively interprets a situation, and how that interpretation shapes psychological development (Vygotsky, 1994-1999; Veresov, 2016). Rather than treating emotion and cognition as separate domains, perezhivanie captures their irreducible unity in the act of experiencing. As Vygotsky (1994) argues, the environment does not directly determine development; rather, it is refracted through perezhivanie — through the meaning the person makes of it. This makes perezhivanie a particularly powerful analytical lens for understanding how teachers navigate environments laden with contradiction, tension, and difference (Fleer, 2016; Nguyen & Ngo, 2025).

The study is situated within the broader framework of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which provides the theoretical architecture for understanding how individual experience is always already embedded within collective activity systems shaped by tools, rules, community, and division of labour (Leontiev, 1978; Engeström, 2001). Within this framework, the contradictions and tensions inherent in a pre-service teacher's activity system — between his own linguistic and cultural background, the institutional norms of schooling, and the diverse needs of his students — constitute the environmental conditions that are refracted through perezhivanie. CHAT thus serves not as a parallel analytical lens, but as the sociocultural scaffolding within which perezhivanie is located and rendered intelligible.

This study employs a qualitative narrative inquiry design (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), affording an in-depth exploration of how individuals construct meaning across time within sociocultural contexts. The participant — assigned the pseudonym Salih for the purposes of ethical anonymisation — was selected through purposive sampling: he is currently undertaking his first teaching practicum in a school community whose cultural and linguistic

background differs markedly from his own. Salih is a Kurmanji-speaking pre-service teacher who attended school under a bussed-education system for twelve years, travelling daily from his village to a distant school where instruction was conducted exclusively in Turkish. His native language was absent from the curriculum; his ethnic identity was a source of marginalisation. Data have been generated through an autobiographical narrative and reflective diaries; semi-structured interviews are planned as a subsequent phase. Analysis follows the three analytical dimensions of perezhivanie identified by Veresov and Fleer (2016): the environmental situation, the emotional-cognitive refraction, and the developmental outcome.

These accumulated experiences constitute the environmental layer of Salih's perezhivanie — not a single traumatic event, but a chronic, structurally embedded condition of exclusion. His autobiographical narrative reveals how experiences of shame and inadequacy were gradually refracted, through sustained dialogue with his mother, into the founding motivation of his professional identity. His mother's affirming presence functioned as a mediating tool, enabling a reinterpretation of exclusion as empathic strength. The reflective diaries illuminate how this perezhivanie continued to shape his classroom conduct: upon observing an experienced teacher respond with genuine inclusion to a student struggling with the language of instruction, Salih described experiencing — for the first time in his practicum — a felt sense of what it means to be a teacher. Past experience, present observation, and emergent identity converged in a single transformative moment: a perezhivanie in the fullest sense. The findings of this study contribute to scholarship at the intersection of teacher education and sociocultural theory, offering a theoretically grounded account of how perezhivanie mediates professional development in contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity.

4847 – Annalisa Ventrella, Maria Beatrice Ligorio (University of Bari Aldo Moro): Using AI to study: A Codebook to explore the dimensions involved

Comparisons between technology-assisted and traditional study strategies have been extensively explored (Byers et al., 2018). However, little is known about how digital and traditional tools are currently integrated within study strategies. Bligh and Coyle (2013) applied the activity system model to investigate technology use in postgraduate education, highlighting that technological innovations are shaped not only by their intrinsic characteristics but also by the broader social structures in which they are embedded. Using Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as an interpretive framework, this study examines the activity system through which students organize their study strategies using digital, AI-based, and analogic tools. CHAT is operationalized as an analytical lens to identify how students organize and negotiate their study activity through the interaction of subjects, tools, community, rules, and object/outcomes (Engeström, 1987). In this study, the subject refers to students' cognitive, metacognitive, and emotional experiences; the tools include analogic materials together with digital and AI-based resources; the community comprises peers, teachers, and academic cultures; the rules concern explicit and implicit norms regulating studying and AI use; and the object corresponds to academic learning goals and performance. This study investigates how Italian university students combine digital and analogic materials, including AI tools. The research questions guiding the investigation are:

RQ1. *How do Italian university students combine analogical and digital/AI tools in their study strategies?*

RQ2. *What dimensions most influence study strategies?*

4848 – Monique Verhoeven, Milou Munsters, Marije van Braak, Kila van der Starre, Ralph Meulenbroeks, Jimmy van Rijt, Marijke de Belder (Utrecht University): How to diminish teacher shortages in secondary education? Exploring the role of undergraduate programs in promoting or discouraging the teaching profession.

The global shortage of secondary school teachers negatively impacts the quality of education. In the Netherlands, the low influx of students in teacher training programs contributes to this issue. Research on why students in teaching training programs chose this option, mainly used the expectancy-value theory (EVT) as an analytical lens. We aim to add to this body of research in two ways. First, we focus on students who have not yet decided whether to enroll in a teaching training program or not: undergraduate students. Second, we study the role of various undergraduate programs as activity systems that these undergraduate students participate in. While the EVT acknowledges the role of ‘social environments’ in people’s career choices, it has struggled to examine it (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). We deem a CHAT perspective helpful to especially identify the objects, instruments and rules that students from various undergraduate programs encounter, thereby enabling to explore how these may inform the development of their career choices through intersubjectivity (Engeström & Sannino, 2021). We therefore examined the research question ‘What role do various undergraduate programs as activity systems play in students’ reasons to pursue an upper-secondary teaching career or not?’.

We conducted a diverse case study at a Dutch university, comparing programs in the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities that differ in whether the teacher shortage in related secondary school subject is relatively high (Dutch and Computer Science), low (History and Physics), or moderate (Economics and Geography). Per program, we organized one focus group with students and one with faculty members. Focus group questions concerned what appeared appealing to a teaching career or not, and whether and how the career option of a secondary education teacher was addressed in career orientation activities within the programs. To triangulate, the websites of these programs were collected as data too. An abductive, thematic analysis was conducted.

In conclusion, the programs’ objects and rules related to the assigned status of a secondary education teaching career compared to other careers appear to play an important role for undergraduate students to pursue a teaching career or not. In this career decision process, the factual teacher shortage only appears to play a limited role. Hence, the results raise questions about how students can be inspired to pursue a career in teaching, even if their education allows them to pursue alternative career paths with a higher status or better working conditions (higher salary and lower workload). Future studies could focus on the role of other activity systems in the career decisions of undergraduate students.

4850 – Monique Volman (University of Amsterdam): Learning to contribute to a better future; how schools can support young people's transformative agency

The current generation of young people is growing up in a world full of complex problems: war, climate change, racism, and many more. (Duraiappah et al., 2022). For some of them, this leads to stress and a sense of powerlessness, as it is often not clear what they, as an individual, can or should do. Experiencing a sense of agency is essential for both young people's personal well-being and their social participation and engagement (De Winter, 2024). This highlights a challenge for schools which may previously have been more implicit; it does not suffice to equip students with the knowledge to function within existing social frameworks. Education also has a role to play in developing students' transformative agency - a concept which I define in line with Stetsenko (2019) as individuals' contributions to collectively changing social practices. In Stetsenko's cultural-historical conceptualization, transformative agency is intrinsically connected with development, as it emphasizes that people are being changed in the same process of them changing the world. This makes transformative agency highly relevant for education. Yet, schools generally pay little attention to transformative forms of agency (Erstad et al., 2025), or in Edwards' words "do not create the agentic, creative, ethical, questioning learners that society needs" (Edwards, 2025, p. 919).

In recent years, however, initiatives have emerged in primary and secondary education and teacher training, in which researchers and teachers develop curricula and pedagogical approaches that respond to the challenge of helping young people discover how they can contribute to a better, fairer, and more sustainable society. This presentation focuses on five projects in primary and secondary education and teacher education that aim to support the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for participating in such endeavours. It analyses the underlying principles of their curricula and pedagogy, and discusses how the involved practitioners experience these work out for different groups of students (e.g. primary or secondary education), and which dilemmas they encounter. The results increase our understanding of developing transformative agency and can inform future curricula and pedagogical approaches.

4851 – Stefan Schuster (University of Erfurt): Alienation and Development. An Attempt to Intertwine the Concept of Alienation with Cultural-Historical Theory

Until recently, the concept of alienation has received little attention in the field of cultural-historical theory, even though it offers huge potential for a deeper understanding of the concrete interrelationship between the biological, psychological and social level of human existence in modern society (Leont'ev 2012; Schuster 2024). One reason for this could be the fact that the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, in which Marx first outlined his theory of alienation, were published shortly before Vygotskij's death in 1934. However, the discussion of the concept from the perspective of cultural-historical theory is still in its early stages. It is therefore not surprising that apart from tentative initial attempts (Jantzen 1980; 2007) the integration of the concept of alienation into the theoretical framework of critical-materialist pedagogy for people with disabilities remains an area for further research. This is exactly where the lecture comes in. Considering the current debate on terminology–

which is characterized by misunderstandings and a wide range of (totally) different interpretations—the first step is to clarify the intension and extension of the term in relation to Marx and beyond (Schuster 2024; 2026). The key question will be: What does the term ›alienation‹ (not) mean? After heuristic answers to this question were provided in the form of concise theses (Schuster 2025) the concept is linked and intertwined with key assumptions of cultural-historical theory (Vygotskij 1987; 2003). The discussion centers on how alienating conditions influence, or rather obstruct, personality development in modern societies. Understanding these interconnections is essential for transforming society into one, in „which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all“ (Marx & Engels MEW 4, S. 482). Finally, the question is raised: what can we do in educational practice in general and in the field of inclusive education in particular to address alienation and to promote dealienation.

4858 – Marije Schneider, Arjen de Vetten (Leiden University): Shortened Change Laboratories, Limited Transformation?

Sustainable educational change requires attention to both the agency of teachers and students and the systemic nature of problems in educational practice (Bearman et al., 2024; Prenger et al., 2022; Stevens et al., 2024). The Change Laboratory (CL) methodology directly addresses these dimensions. Rooted in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, it conceptualizes change as an expansive learning process in which participants collaboratively question existing practices, identify and analyze contradictions, and develop new forms of activity (Engeström, 2011; Sannino, 2022). In doing so, CLs aim to foster transformative agency and durable change within complex social systems.

While prior research shows that CLs can lead to transformation (authors, forthcoming), important questions remain about how the design of specific phases shapes outcomes, particularly in contexts of acceleration. From a CHAT-perspective, development is understood as an expansive, collective process in which participants gradually construct new meanings, practices, and forms of activity. In a complete CL, the questioning phase is crucial for this development: participants jointly experience, discover and identify contradictions in their own practice, enabling the emergence of transformative agency and shared ownership.

The introduction of shortened CLs is a response to institutional constraints within higher education. Lecturers often have tightly scheduled teaching loads, administrative tasks and conduct research in their fields on top of that. A traditional CL trajectory competes directly with these obligations and is therefore difficult to prioritize. This leads to more efficient formats in which contradictions are pre-identified and presented to participants, rather than co-constructed. While this accelerates the process, it fundamentally alters the dynamics of the CL.

This study focuses on the questioning phase in shortened CLs conducted in 2025–2026. In these shortened formats, previously identified contradictions were introduced to participants, rather than emerging through a collective questioning process. The central research question is: How does the design of the questioning phase in shortened Change Laboratories influence educational transformation, transformative agency and the consolidation of new practices?

Researcher-interventionists and teachers collaboratively analyze whether and how identified contradictions are addressed. The study employs a qualitative, narrative approach. Data include panel discussions and interviews with teachers and students, observations, and written teacher reflections. Narrative analyses are used to construct transformation narratives for each participant, enabling insight into degrees of transformation and influencing factors. Data from three change labs has been included.

Preliminary findings suggest that some participants in shortened CLs did not sufficiently internalize the “imposed” contradictions. As a result, they tended to distance themselves from these tensions, leading to limited modification rather than genuine transformation of practice. This weakened the shared understanding and commitment necessary for expansive learning and potentially limited transformation to superficial adjustments rather than deep structural change.

These findings raise critical questions about the balance between acceleration and agency in CL design, and about how intersubjectivity is established in collaborative change processes. The study thus shows that acceleration is not a neutral intervention. It potentially reshapes the conditions for development. By analyzing how the design of the questioning phase influences participants’ engagement with contradictions, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the temporal and intersubjective conditions required for transformative educational change.

The study contributes to methodological reflection on CL design and offers practical insights into how CLs can be structured to support both transformative agency and sustainable organizational change.

4854 – Rene Streutker, Siebrich de Vries, Marco Mazereeuw (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences & University of Groningen), Thomas Teekens (University of Groningen): Combining Mixed Method Social Network Analysis and CHAT to better understand Change Labs and their interaction with the broader surrounding organization

Three university-school partnerships participate in a three-year project exploring ways to strengthen student agency. Change Labs (CLs) (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013), based on the principles of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2014), are being used and researched. The three CLs comprise of representatives of different departments within the university-school partnerships. They act as linking pins between the CLs and their departments, gathering the different voices of their department and spreading new ways of working and thinking within their organizations. However, this diffusion proves difficult in practice and is studied to a limited extent (Sannino & Engeström, 2017).

In this study, as one of the first (Murphy et al., 2020), we use mixed methods social network analysis (MMSNA) to map and understand the spreading of new ways of thinking and learning through CLs. Both CHAT and SNA are concerned with socio-material networks and their development (cf. Murphy et al., 2020), but have a slightly different, but complementary perspective. Where CHAT and CLs focus on how an activity system (AS) develops while more and more people engage with the object of their activity, MMSNA focuses more on the type

and quality of interaction people are having (inside and outside the defined AS) while engaging in activity. Combining these perspectives could enrich and deepen our understanding of the development of human activity through CLs. The study examines the question: *How and to what extent are new ways of thinking about student agency and resulting ways of working spreading within the university-school partnerships?*

To map both the number of people and the type and quality of interaction, whole network questionnaires were administered to all participants of the three CLs over a three-year period. The network questionnaires were descriptively analyzed and subsequently visualized. Preliminary results show that the ego networks consist of four to more than one hundred connections. Participants primarily talk to people in their networks who are perceived as being part of the community of the AS being developed (e.g. direct colleagues) and/or having relevant perspectives for the CL (e.g. their partner or an expert on agency). Few new network connections are made due to participation in the CLs.

4856 – Fardau Visser (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): Tensions in the Enactment of Minority Language Education Policy

This presentation draws on findings from a PhD project that examines what happens when the temporal demands of policy-driven ambitions collide with the often slower rhythms of collective professional development. Using the revision of core objectives for Frisian language and culture (FLC) in the Netherlands as an empirical case, the project explores how this educational reform is interpreted and enacted across different layers of the educational system, from provincial policy to classroom practice. In doing so, it investigates the conditions under which meaningful collective development can, or cannot, emerge.

The introduction of revised core objectives for Frisian language and culture education presents a significant challenge for schools in Fryslân. The reform marks a shift from a curriculum centered on the school's educational provision to one that places pupils' experiences more centrally. As such, the reform confronts schools with competing historical practices, policy ambitions and institutional expectations. This raises the overarching question: How do cultural-historical tensions within and between the different layers of curriculum making shape the development of Frisian language and culture education in primary- and secondary schools in Fryslân?

While the results are still underway, preliminary analyses reveal a dominant pattern of stabilization: teachers hold on to existing narratives and practices as a response to institutional conditions that structurally impede transformation (Engeström, 2007; Rainio & Hofmann, 2021).

Together, the three sub-studies explore a central paradox: the structures designed to support curriculum reform. The Frisian case offers insight into tensions that extend beyond minority language education settings, particularly where curriculum reform intersects with issues of linguistic- and cultural sustainability, professional identity and institutional recognition.

4857 - Adriaan H.L. Walpot (Utrecht University), Larike Bronkhorst, Monika Louws, Jan van Tartwijk (De Werkplaats Kindergemeenschap): Students and teachers regaining trust and meaning in schooling activity through Transformative Agency.

100 years after its conception, a well-known Dutch school finds itself disconnected from its founding principle of equality between students and teachers. In the school's philosophy, students work on becoming their authentic self within society and teachers support them in their journey. Nowadays, students distrust teachers and there is a sense of loss of educational meaning. I am myself a teacher at this school and turned to the Change Laboratory (CL) methodology (Virkkunen & Newnham 2013) to reinvent student-teacher shared activity in modern times. CLs are formative interventions in which participants collaboratively develop their activity. Our study aims to provide first insights into such a collaboration.

RQ: How does TA develop in- and around a CL where students and teachers develop their (shared) activity?

In the 2025-2026 school year, four teachers who share upper-secondary classes, eight of their students, and three researchers (including myself) enacted a CL to develop student-teacher shared activity. As a teacher, I am not part of the upper-secondary teacher team. The CL consisted of 11 sessions of 30-120 minutes that took place during school hours over a time-span of six months. Recruiting participants proved the greatest challenge. At the start of the CL, most students quit; even those who had been unrestrainedly outspoken in previous conversations with me now commented "I don't think I have enough of an opinion for this". This moment marked a turning point in our approach to the CL: Instead of structuring the CL to the expansive learning cycle (Engeström 1999), we let students and teachers' frustrations and resulting agentic actions drive the process (e.g., share a list of participants' issues with school leadership). Only subsequently did we introduce tools to the participants to analyze their activity. As a result, shared TA developed rapidly. At the end of the year, the broader teacher team wanted to pilot a model created in the CL, in which teachers regularly host informal conversations with students – mimicking the development of TA experienced in the CL.

Keeping students engaged with the project seemed to be most important for the development of TA, even when this did not follow the expansive learning cycle. Furthermore, interventionists should consider ways to involve the adjacent community, so as not to alienate subjects outside of the CL.

4859 - Albert Walsweer, Frans Hiddink (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): The impact of a multi-layer curriculum transformation: from policy implementation to policy enactment

Providing high-quality language education in Fryslân, the only officially bilingual province of the Netherlands, is inherently complex. Schools are required to balance Dutch, Frisian as the regional minority language, and English, while also responding to growing linguistic diversity. Within this dynamic context, a large-scale curriculum transformation was initiated in 2016 to

strengthen multilingual education and reposition Frisian within a broader plurilingual framework (Varkevisser et al., 2023). Although stakeholders widely acknowledge the value of this multi-layer approach, a deeper understanding is needed of how impact developed over time across different system levels. Therefore, this study addresses the question: What forms of impact emerged and became visible in this curriculum transformation?

Adopting a qualitative ethnographic approach (Davies, 1999), this impact study is embedded in a broader multi-level curriculum transformation that has generated multiple initiatives, studies, and forms of documentation over time. For the present analysis, ethnographic fieldnotes and a series of semi-structured interviews conducted between October 2025 and May 2026 with the project leader responsible for the development and coordination of the transformation were used to reconstruct and interpret how impact was perceived, negotiated, and traced across system levels.

Findings are organized through a PRIME matrix and illustrated by three narratives. Together, these narratives show how the transformation unfolded over time through a series of decisions, tensions, trade-offs, and adaptations. The study suggests that impact in a complex curriculum transformation is neither linear nor fixed, but develops through ongoing interaction between actors, ambitions, and contextual developments. Evident forms of impact include strengthened professional learning networks, increased awareness of multilingual pedagogies, and more integrated approaches to Frisian within broader pluralistic language education. At the same time, other forms of impact remain partial, uneven, or still emerging.

Rather than treating impact as a set of measurable end products, this research understands it as a situated and evolving process. The study demonstrates the value of ethnographic narrative analysis for making complex curriculum change visible, while also showing that transformation in minority language education remains inherently open-ended.

4860 – Ines Langemeyer (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology): What are holistic explanations – advantages and critique

The idea of wholes and parts – a central idea of Gestalt theory – is still relevant in psychological research. A recent discussion revolves around the questions about finding causal relations or causal mechanisms beyond linear causality (e.g. Eronen, 2013; Woodward, 2021). Since methodological reflections of Lev Vygotsky in various writings are concerned with this question, more precisely with the “causal dynamics of interaction” (Jörg, 2017, p. 31), the issue is important also for cultural-historical activity theory. Vygotsky reflected many considerations by Kurt Lewin and his team in the 1930s (Langemeyer, 2023) to explain what he means by the psychological “law” that every psychic function appears twice, first, on the plane of an interpersonal relationship, second, on the plane of an intrapersonal relationship when capacities are mastered individually. Causation is then interpreted as a “generative process” as well as a “self-sustaining” process (Jörg, 2017, p. 34).

Similar to Vygotsky’s understanding of reciprocal effects related to the use of language, also the psychological research on emotions draws on holistic explanations. The argument of approaches of embodied cognition works, particularly, with regard to the notion of “non-

linear” or “circular causality” to “characterize the relation between parts and whole within the living organism as well as within the organism–environment system” (Fuchs, 2020, p. 11). This notion includes both “downward and upward causation” between different levels of psychic life (in psychoanalytic terms, it means “progression” in contrast to “regression”) insofar as this enables “the actual effectiveness of embodied subjectivity in the world” (p. 2) which operates both on “self-affection” and “self-awareness” (Fuchs, 2020, p. 3). “However, the anticipatory structure of the action–perception cycle involves the entire body interacting with its environment and may not be reduced to a ‘predictive brain’” (Fuchs, 2020, p. 6). Regarding brain research, also the notion of levels has been introduced to explain the phenomena at stake such as the emergence of meaning or the consolidation of memory. The paper compares the holistic explanations in psychology (cf. Fuchs, 2023) and presents the controversy about the arguments for and against the idea of downward as well as upward causation. It refers to the concept of “emergence” which was first introduced in 1875 by G.H. Lewes in *Problems of Mind and Life* (Sève, 2005, p. 154, Fn. 130). Different methodological implications are critically discussed.

4861 – Vincent Grosstephan, Eva Werndorfer, Christine Felix (Aix-Marseille Université), Yannick Lémonie (CRTD - CNAM Paris): Acting Without a Clear Object : Frontline work in Educational Inequality

How can professionals act meaningfully when the very object of their work remain indeterminate? This paper addresses this question through an intervention-research project targeting educational inequalities among children facing significant academic, social or family difficulties. These children come from working-class neighbourhoods in Marseille. The initiative is implemented by the Groupement d'Intérêt Public Réussite Éducative (GIP RÉ), a hybrid multi-level dispositif. While existing research on educational inequalities often focuses on outcomes, policies and institutional dispositifs, it tends to overlook the lived activity of frontline professionals and the contradictions they must navigate in practice. This paper addresses this gap by analyzing work as a site where public policy is interpreted, negotiated and transformed. The research team commissioned to conduct a research-based intervention. The intervention is grounded in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and articulates the clinics of activity (Clot, 2008) with the theory of expansive learning (Engeström, 2015). From a methodological perspective, the research intervention is carried out in two main phases. The first phase consists of an ethnographic inquiry involving semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentary analysis, conducted with twenty-one professionals and three members of the management team. Preliminary findings reveal three major tensions. First, the indeterminacy of the object 'educational success' creates a structural ambiguity permeating everyday work. Coordinators must navigate between highly heterogeneous situations to be addressed and the relatively high homogeneity of available responses leading to persistent uncertainty regarding the purpose of their work and professional identity. Second, coordinators operate within a structurally fragile environment characterised by precarious contracts, unattainable numerical targets, lack of recognition for caseworkers' relational and emotional work, managerial instability, and poor communication with management and the governing body. Third, partnerships are marked by asymmetry, ambiguity and latent competition as actors navigate between collaboration and service provision relationships in a field where areas of intervention often overlap or even compete.

Ultimately, the article concludes that addressing inequalities necessitates confronting the inherent contradictions of work itself.

**4863 – Paulina Rantavuori (Tampere University), Yrjö Engeström (University of Helsinki):
What Can School Give? Empowering Students to Take Ownership of Their Own Learning**

Across contemporary educational systems, there is growing evidence that young people are becoming alienated from school. There appear to be a good number of students for whom school offers little and whose voices and potential are often not considered. This paper explores how school structures can create alienation and how pedagogical practices can be transformed to counteract it. Importantly, school alienation appears widespread and not limited to specific demographic groups, highlighting systemic aspects of schooling that many students find alienating. These conditions underscore the urgent need for global efforts to address the structural and relational factors that contribute to students' alienation from school.

In Finland, although the curriculum officially encourages student participation, opportunities for students to influence the content and direction of their learning remain limited. This creates a key paradox: schools officially support participation and inclusion, yet in practice students often have little power over what and how they learn.

This presentation explores how schools can support students in taking genuine ownership of their learning through a Change Laboratory (CL) intervention grounded in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). The study draws on a long-term intervention with adolescent students at a Finnish comprehensive school.

From a CHAT perspective, power is linked to the object of activity. Instead of just aiming for freedom from control, CHAT highlights the importance of identifying a meaningful object that both requires and generates power. Empowering students means recognizing and supporting objects they find meaningful, with adults authorizing students as owners of their learning.

The working hypothesis identifies primary contradictions within students' schoolwork as an activity system. These contradictions first appear in the object, between reproducing pre-made school texts for grades (exchange value) and gaining meaningful knowledge to understand the world (use value). Second, they are present in the rules, where officially espoused rules promote student participation, but rules in use leave little room for students' initiative. Although legal and curricular frameworks encourage active engagement, they are often reduced in practice to symbolic forms of participation that are manageable. As a result, these primary contradictions mostly remain hidden and become apparent only through secondary signs, such as absenteeism or mental health issues.

The CL intervention revealed six types of discursive actions through which students' power was exemplified, most notably taking ownership of the process and committing to take concrete actions. These actions developed gradually over time, showing that student power is processual, longitudinal, and non-linear, rather than immediate or given. Key milestones,

such as identifying the final product and engaging in transgressive actions, marked turning points in students' power-gaining process.

The study concludes that student power develops through sustained collective engagement with a meaningful object. Genuine ownership cannot be proclaimed in advance but must be built gradually through action.

4864 – Arum Nisma Wulanjani (University of Sydney): Collective Development of Teaching Practice in Teacher Education: A Change Laboratory Intervention in Transforming Activity Systems

Efforts to integrate 21st-century skills in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) increasingly require changes in teaching practice rather than the adoption of isolated pedagogical methods. However, such changes often generate tensions among those involved in teacher education. While these tensions are frequently treated as implementation problems, less is discussed about how they emerge as collective developmental phenomena through social participation in professional practice.

This study examines the collective development of teaching practice in ITE through a Change Laboratory intervention (Engeström, Virkkunen, Helle, Pihlaja, & Poikela, 1996) involving teacher educators, mentor teachers, and student teachers. Guided by Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 1987, 2001), this study conceptualised teaching practice in ITE as a collective, object-oriented activity system shaped by historically accumulated contradictions. This study addressed the question: How do contradictions emerge during collaborative efforts to develop teaching practice for student teachers, and how do these contradictions unfold through collective participation?

Empirical data were generated through six Change Laboratory workshops and analysed using a two-stage process. First, expansive learning actions enacted across workshops were identified to trace patterns of collective engagement (Engeström, 2015). Second, boundary moments—where shifts and overlaps in learning actions occurred—were analysed to examine how initial tensions developed into explicit contradictions.

Findings show that contradictions emerged progressively within and across activity systems as participants negotiated differing orientations towards teaching practice, curriculum, and responsibility for student teacher learning. These contradictions included tensions within the object of teaching practice itself, between pedagogical intentions, between existing and emerging models of practice, and across interconnected university–school contexts.

The study contributes theoretically by conceptualising boundary moments as key sites linking social participation to the emergence of contradictions in collective developmental processes. Practically, it demonstrates how engaging multiple actors in structured collaborative interventions can support the development of teaching practice for student teachers by treating contradictions as resources for learning and transformation rather than as obstacles to change.

4867 – Paula Ahola, Antti Rajala (University of Helsinki), Anna Stetsenko (City University of New York): "Now, now, now!": climate crisis, young people and agency in the collision of temporalities

"Each generation must discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it, in relative opacity." — Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

With the world spiraling in the polycrisis, - accelerating climate crisis among the leading concerns - the turn of the 2020s has marked a watershed for global youth-led climate action (Neas, Ward & Bowman, 2022). Within the historical continuum of environmental and climate movements, a unique feature of the current mobilizations is the unprecedented number of young participants and first-time protesters (de Moor, De Vydt, Uba & Wahlström, 2020). The strong youth involvement in the struggle for a livable future reflects a sense of urgency and emergency to address and contest the inertia and insufficient climate action while calling for societal transformations.

This paper suggests that it is in facing this monumental challenge and taking it up (i.e. acting on it) as the task of their generation that young climate activists are simultaneously transforming themselves into a unique generation with an extraordinary sociopolitical and historical mission (to use Frantz Fanon's language) – in thus making up themselves as unique historical actors of change.

The research has been guided by the following questions: What makes the young generation special in relation to the climate crisis? How are young climate activists uniquely agentic in terms of facing and engaging with the task?

Applying cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) framework, - especially in its extension in transformative activist stance (TAS) approach – this paper theoretically elaborates the intertwining of colliding temporalities, task and agency. In dialogue with theoretical examinations, the paper will provide empirical reflections on agency formation among young Finnish climate activists who took part in the climate movement. The data consists of focus-group interviews.

4870 – Mayke Vereijken, Jereon Vermeulen, Sanne Akkerman (Utrecht University): University education in and with the world: Transformative processes in Community Engaged Education

As the world shows complex and accelerating psychological, socio-political, economic, technological and climate developments (Rosa, 2020), universities increasingly invest in forms of community engaged education (CEE) (Farnell, 2020). CEE seeks to realize societal change locally (e.g., within organizations, neighborhoods, clinics and community centers) through reciprocal university-community partnerships (Farnell, 2020). Similar developments can be observed at Utrecht University (UU), where so-called community engaged learning (CEL) initiatives aim to foster more intensive collaboration between students, teachers and societal partners.

This direct engagement with reality in all its multiplicity necessitates conceptualizing learning in this study as socially mediated, object-oriented activity system, in line with CHAT. The research question is: What transformative processes reside in various CEE initiatives, considering experiential learning as described and set out by students and teachers?

This study employed a narrative design. 30 Teachers of 25 CEL-initiatives across all faculties of UU were interviewed on what and how the initiatives work between October 2022 and May 2025. 51 Student experiences of seven initiatives were captured either in 1) one-minute interviews by students themselves, interviewing each other on what it is that makes CEL different from other education or 2) anonymized written individual student reflection reports.

All initiatives entail experiential learning in the sense that teachers and students learn about themselves, others, (trans)disciplines and the world as it appears in many different ways. We see initiatives happening at three places which imply different understandings of the communities involved.

Students and teachers familiarize themselves with communities to consider what is at hand while making plans to act upon. Familiarizing evokes a responsibility in students and teachers which in some initiatives implies multiple directions for the initiative. In some initiatives students and teachers indicate to seek for a motive for shared activity during the initiative. Practically, these three processes can help universities to identify and foster their societal orientation in educational practice, highlighting that reciprocal collaboration with partners requires sustained presence on location and ongoing co-construction of purpose in practice.

4871 – Nynke Anna Varkevisser (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): School advisers crossing boundaries between policy and school practice

Across Europe, plurilingual education is seen as essential to democratic societies (Council of Europe, 2022). However, the teaching of regional or minority languages (RMLs) presents challenges, as dominant narratives about what constitutes “good education” in schools are persistent and slow to change (Van der Veen & Van Oers, 2019). Successful RML education requires institutional support and language planning, often provided by local organisations and authorities (Van Dongera et al., 2017).

This study focuses on primary schools in the province of Fryslân in the Netherlands, where the teaching of Frisian as a RML has been legally obliged since 1980. To bridge the gap between the government’s intended curriculum and the curriculum enacted in schools (Varkevisser et al., 2023), a support structure has been developed within the provincial language policy plan Taalplan Frysk 2030. In this structure, skoalstippers (school advisers) from local organisations support schools in enacting Frisian Language and Culture (FLC). Although this support structure is established, little is known about how it functions in practice or how, and to what extent, skoalstippers facilitate the enactment of FLC.

Drawing on CHAT as an analytical lens (Engeström, 2015), we explore how skoalstippers navigate between various interpretations of the FLC curriculum at the level of the province and the school, while also bringing in their own understandings of FLC. We speak of

enactment rather than implementation, because policy is interpreted and recontextualised in practice, within and between interacting activity systems, in processes that take time and cannot simply be imposed (Ball et al., 2012).

Adopting an exploratory qualitative research design, the study draws on online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and skoalstippers' logbooks.

Analysis is ongoing. Preliminary findings suggest that skoalstippers' positions are shaped by their diverse professional backgrounds, resulting in different ways of supporting schools in enacting FLC. Research in other RML contexts (e.g. Carr & Morris, 2016) and studies on boundary crossing (e.g. Honig, 2006) likewise point to the complex and often ambiguous roles of actors involved in educational transformation. This presentation invites discussion on how intersubjective understandings of curriculum change are developed across interacting activity systems and how CHAT can help analyze these processes over time.

4872 – Indy Joosten (University of Amsterdam), Sanne Akkerman, Monique Volman, Monique Verhoeven (Utrecht University): Qualities of adolescents' out-of-school interest-based learning processes: a literature review

There is a widespread concern regarding adolescents' low levels of school engagement, which is found to generally decline during the first years of secondary education (Gillet et al., 2012). This appears to imply that many adolescents are not particularly interested in school and feel alienated from it. Yet, all adolescents – irrespective of their school engagement – are known to have many interests, both academic and extra-curricular ones (Akkerman et al., 2020).

Answering the question of what qualities of adolescent interest-based learning processes can be identified can first provide insights into how adolescents' involvement in in-school learning processes that, to a certain extent, are obligatory in nature, may be further supported. Second, research on learning has traditionally focused on short-term design innovations in schools (Barron, 2010). This literature review seeks to expand these insights by examining more long-term and out-of-school interest-based learning processes, highlighting how people both experience and create learning opportunities.

We aimed to answer our research question by reviewing thirty-five contextually rich, empirical studies that used qualitative methods that were peer-reviewed, accessible, and in languages that the authors could understand.

Three preliminary and non-exclusionary qualities of adolescents' out-of-school interest-based learning processes have been identified: it is adaptive, as learning unfolds through the process of continuously adjusting and exploring when, where, how and why they pursue their interests within available resources; self-directed, as adolescents exercise agency and make deliberate choices about which opportunities to take up to follow their interests; and active-responsive, as much of the learning through interest pursuits often occurs through hands-on, creation-based activities that are guided by direct involvement and immediate responses from the activity itself.

These findings suggest several implications for how educational professionals can support learning related to adolescents' interest pursuits. In the presentation, we plan to discuss these implications and other questions with the audience during a plenary discussion.

4874 – Arda Oosterhoff (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): Teacher agency in an automated social world: what might that look like?

Teacher agency is high on the agendas of educational researchers. Agency – in short: the ability to exert influence – gains importance in current times in which social life, including professional life, increasingly is driven by new technologies. How can educational professionals maintain - or regain - a sense of agency in an increasingly automated educational world?

Cultural-historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Sannino et al., 2009) as well as Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 2005; Mol, 2010) aim to work out new understandings of agency. Agency often is associated with human intention, influence and power. Instead, sociomaterial approaches to educational research, like CHAT and ANT decenter the human, and focus on relations among different kinds of entities as the source of action (Fenwick et al., 2011). However, in my own – preliminary – encounters with CHAT in educational research, I noticed that the ideas of ANT seem to place a more radical emphasis on the agency of objects compared with CHAT (see also Fenwick et al., 2011).

Three distinctive notions of ANT – radical symmetry, multiplicity and translation – are helpful to investigate agency as distributed: spread across networks of people and things, including new technologies. These notions, and the sensitivities they provoke, might be of additional benefit within CHAT research and Change Labs when exploring 'the possibility of human beings' gaining influence and agency over their own [professional] lives' (Sannino et al., 2009, p.xviii), especially in the current era of ever-increasing power of technologies.

The ANT conception of nonhuman agency has been a prominent strand of contention within criticisms of ANT. Critically analysing education with ANT-sensibilities has only gained in relevance in the current age of datafication (Jarke & Breitner, 2019).

In my presentation I aim to highlight the value of the three ANT-notions – symmetry, multiplicity, translation – based on a research project in which I investigated the way educational standards 'work' in early childhood education, assisted by heuristics for 'interviewing objects' (Adams and Thompson, 2016). In addition, I will share – in a nutshell – how I also worked with these heuristics in several ANT-workshops with educational practitioners (students, teachers and school leaders). Subsequently, I would like to discuss with the audience the specific added value that ANT sensitivities could have for CHAT research and ChangeLab practices.

**4876 – Stefanie Schmachtel (Martin-Luther-University of Halle & IU Frankfurt am Main):
Collective agency and development in a governmentally funded research-practice-
partnership: an ideology-critical analysis**

Amid increasing expectations for research to demonstrate societal impact, research-practice partnerships (RPPs) have gained popularity as a key instrument for collaboratively addressing complex social problems. RPPs explicitly seek to bridge the divide between research and practice by bringing together diverse epistemic perspectives and forms of expertise in order to facilitate social change and development (e.g., Farley-Ripple et al., 2018; Coburn & Penuel, 2016). This development is accompanied by a growing body of empirical work that provides detailed insights into both the potentials and limitations of RPPs (e.g., McGeown & Sjölund, 2025; Coburn & Penuel, 2016). However, existing research has largely focused on the processes through which knowledge work is organized and enacted within RPPs, while paying comparatively little attention to its contents and to the broader discursive formations upon which actors draw in their efforts to constitute collective agency in RPPs. In addition, empirical studies – predominantly case-based – tend to treat the material and discursive effects of third-party funding contexts and project-based organizational forms as given background conditions, rather than interrogating how these arrangements actively shape the production of knowledge within RPPs.

Against this backdrop, we examine the processes that shape collective agency and development within the RPP analyzed in our study, paying particular attention to how actors negotiate the imperatives arising from political, institutional, and funding contexts. To this end, we draw on an ideology-critical practice research framework to analyse the processes of developing collective agency and development within the studied RPP, conceptualising it as a process of relational placemaking (cf. Pierce et al. 2011). Substantialising it with Nissen's (2012; 2018) critical cultural-historical and other ideology-theoretical work, we analyse how actors intersubjectively co-construct a common sense in the course of the RPP activities, studying their relational place-making as a situated ideology-formation. Empirically, our analysis is based on data from an (auto)ethnographic case study of a German government-funded RPP that is aimed to reduce educational barriers for primary-school children in disadvantaged urban and rural communities. By focusing analytically on emergent conflicts among participants, we reconstruct the place-frames underpinning their positions, the power relations these frames bring about, and the ideologies that inform actors' place-making practices. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which the RPP's third-party funding context shapes these place-frames both discursively and socio-materially, as well as to the multiple - partly conflicting - levels (individual, collective, political) at which collective agency and development are (and are not) realized.

A critical reflection on the ideologies underpinning the enacted forms of agency points to two central dynamics. First, the avoidance of (political) conflict constrains actors' relational place-making to the reproduction of a taken-for-granted common sense, thereby reinscribing institutionalized forms of agency. Second, the RPP's primary objective – reducing educational barriers – remains largely unexamined; rather than being actively problematized, it is often tacitly presupposed within the partnership's knowledge practices. Consequently, educational inequality was mainly addressed through the implicit lens of a meritocratic ideal, instead of being opened up to contestation. Building on these findings, we discuss the

implications for the constitution and expansion of collective agency, as well as for the role of research in a context increasingly marked by crisis and political polarization.

4881 – Brett Bligh (Lancaster University): Developing Expansive Learning in Doctoral Education: Online Change Laboratory Projects-in-Miniature

This paper addresses the conference theme of development through the question of how doctoral students may experience developmental forms of learning through the Change Laboratory methodology. Doctoral education is a setting in which new researchers are formed intellectually and professionally, yet one also marked by isolation, uncertainty, workload, and pressure for timely completion. Under such conditions, students are often incentivised to adopt conservative and familiar research designs rather than developmental methodologies with steeper learning curves.

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), with its reputation for intellectual ambition and a demanding learning curve (Lémonie, 2025), can therefore appear unattractive. This is problematic, because CHAT is well placed to address urgent contemporary challenges (Engeström, 2016), and such challenges often motivate doctoral study in the first place.

The paper explores the idea that Change Laboratory projects-in-miniature can create opportunities for developmental learning within doctoral education, provided that they address genuine problems experienced by doctoral students in their own lives and work. Participation may help students understand the developmental purpose of the approach, appreciate how a research-intervention can be designed and unfold, and experience using second stimuli such as the activity system themselves. Development therefore concerns not only learning about CHAT, but learning through collective transformative inquiry.

The presentation discusses three Change Laboratory projects-in-miniature conducted in the same doctoral training module in successive academic years.

The three projects addressed objects in which participants had a direct stake. In the first year, participants worked on the informal mutual support provided by networks of online PhD students. In the second, they examined the use of Generative AI tools in academic research. In the third, they examined how PhD students' development is affected by institutional approaches to regulating the use of AI.

Overall, the paper argues that carefully designed Change Laboratory projects-in-miniature can support developmental trajectories in doctoral education by linking methodological learning with the transformation of real problems in students' own academic lives.

4883 – Christel Manske (Hamburg): The significance of Vygotsky's approach to children's development and learning

"It is in our hands whether a child is held back or allowed to develop." When I read this sentence by L.S. Vygotsky fifty years ago, I felt at peace with creation. This thought shows just how crucial our influence is on the development of every child. We bear responsibility for whether a child is supported or hindered in its development. If we read L.S. Vygotsky with

our hearts, we will succeed in approaching every child with reason – that is, in an intersubjective way. Every child is a mystery. Only if we allow the child to take us by the hand and follow unconditionally can we discover the unimagined possibilities of our shared development. The defining question for teachers today is: How can we enable all children to learn successfully together? The defining question for teachers today is: How can we enable all children to learn successfully together? L.S. Vygotsky's answer has convinced me: "Good teaching anticipates the development of every child." This means that lessons are designed to do justice to every child and are geared towards their stage of development. In every class, there are children at different stages of psychological development – from infants to schoolchildren. Ontogenetic teaching moves through the stages of psychological development within a single lesson: infant, toddler, pre-schooler and schoolchild.

What does this mean for the acquisition of spoken and written language during the sensitive period of language development? Teaching must be structured in such a way that it takes into account and supports the different developmental stages of each child.

The acquisition of spoken and written language is guided by each child's psychological developmental stages. The key principle is that each child is addressed and supported in accordance with their individual development.

At the infant stage of psychological development, the child experiences either pleasure or displeasure. For example: if the child eats an apple, they like the taste. They spit it out if the taste does not appeal to them. At the next stage of psychological development, the toddler stage, the child learns to perceive an apple using all five senses. These nuanced perceptions are then given a verbal label. As some children are not yet able to express their experiences in complete words or sentences such as 'yummy' or 'The apple tastes yummy', they learn the sound-word 'M' instead to communicate their taste sensations. It has been shown that even children with Down's syndrome or speech difficulties are able to articulate using these sound words, such as 'M'. This enables them to share their experiences with other children through spoken language and to participate actively in the communication process. During the psychological developmental phase of the preschooler, the sound-word "M" is embedded into the body image with the help of a hand gesture. The child closes their hand into a fist whilst simultaneously directing the movement of their lips towards a closed mouth. This link between gesture and articulation promotes understanding and internalisation of the sound. With the transition to the psychological developmental stage of the school-age child, the child learns to recognise and write the letter M. Here, the letter is traced with the index finger on sandpaper, moulded from wood or written within a frame. The different approaches enable a multi-sensory experience of the written character. By the end of a lesson, all children have mastered the letter M as a sound-word. They can speak and write it. As the individual developmental stages from infancy to school age merge within the learning process of this single lesson, the knowledge acquired in this way is retained in the long term. Children never forget the sound-word combinations they have learnt; none of them need to practise them any longer. The children have all exceeded our expectations. It is the high standard of teaching that drives the development of all the children.

4885 – Naisan Raji (Haus der Volksarbeit e.V., Frankfurt am Main): “This could just as well be Section 35a” - Legalistic fragmentation and alienation in child and youth welfare

In German child and youth welfare, services are provided according to specific sections of the legislation governing support and assistance for children and youth. Access to support highly depends on the administrative assignment of children, adolescents, and their families to these legal categories. In practice, this creates a legalistic fragmentation of child and youth welfare services which mediates professional practice and terminology.

In this theoretical work, it is argued that (1) this practice reflects a static relationship between society and individual; (2) that professional practice is not only highly structured but also constrained by legal logic as cases need to be formally categorised; and (3) that the legalistic fragmentation of services are a potential source of alienated labour within child and youth welfare. Key texts from German child and youth welfare law (SGB VIII) will be revisited and current data on numbers of cases (Rauschenbach et al., 2024, Statistisches Bundesamt, 2026) will be reviewed.

Drawing on Vygotsky’s proposal of the social situation of child development, developmental needs will be outlined as process-oriented, intersubjectively negotiated phenomena. Within this framework, a professional stance will be proposed that—despite the pressure toward legalistic categorisation—places the processuality, intersubjectivity and inherent contradictions of individual development at the center of professional practice. The potential in reducing acceleration and alienation in child and youth welfare labour will be discussed as well as its limits considering rising case numbers and potential cuts in the social welfare system.

4890 – Peter Rödler (Universität Koblenz): Acceleration or Stagnation – Theses on the ‘End of History’

When Fukuyama (2006) proclaimed the ‘end of history’, this thesis – just like the idea of communism having been ‘overcome’, still very much in the spirit of Hegel – was very quickly disproved by real history. It was precisely the arrogance inherent in this thesis that subsequently led the Western-influenced world, now without a counter-thesis, to set in motion global developments that brought about a “new” (!) era in which the interests of capitalism went hand in hand with the enforcement and demand for complete individual freedom (Thiel 2014; Chafkin 2021).

It would be wrong to attribute this demand solely to tech billionaires. Self-determination and individualism have been the holy grail of education at least since the 1968 movement. Alienation manifests itself here in the virtualisation (!) of individuals who, whilst being stripped of their subjectivity, must continue to exist in a reified state (the most recent example in Germany: the nationwide ‘education register’).

In my talk – presented as a series of theses due to time constraints – I would like to demonstrate how this development, in conjunction with the media-driven realisation of the digital – most sophisticatedly in cognitive search engines, which are described as ‘intelligent’

(AI) – is creating a virtualisation of reality that opens up dazzling individual spaces of possibility, but also entails a radical simplification of reality to the point of its invisibility.

The focus on education – particularly in the Western hemisphere – under the influence of this development aims to demonstrate how, amidst this ‘acceleration’ of forms and means, there is simultaneously an almost complete loss of culture as a time-generating space of social significance. (Adorno, Horkheimer 1947) This is also evident in the barely visible oppositional forces in the Western hemisphere. Vigorous resistance tends to come from the Global South and East rather than from Western actors.

Ultimately, the aim of my talk is to highlight the cultural-historical threats of our time and to present (particularly education-related) content that could wrest a possible future from this anti-social cultural stagnation and set individual and social development in motion once more.

In the talk, I will outline these points for around 20 minutes in the form of theses, which I will present also in an enriched handout as I present them, followed by 10 minutes to discuss these theses with the participants. This is due to the nature of the event, which does not allow for a longer time slot for a single speaker. Nevertheless, within the framework of the talk and the discussion, it should be possible to develop perspectives for a culturally and historically sustainable future that extend into (school) educational practice. The handouts will facilitate focused work and also allow for reflection afterwards.

4891 – Daniele Morselli, Beate Weyland (Free University of Bolzano): Implementing a New Model in an Accelerated Activity System: Expansive Learning and the Role of Newcomers in a Kindergarten After a Change Laboratory

This presentation examines how expansive learning unfolds during the implementation phase of a Change Laboratory (CL) intervention in a kindergarten undergoing rapid architectural, organizational, and social transformation. While research on CLs has increasingly systematized the analysis of transformative agency (Haapasaari et al., 2016; Hyrkkö & Kajamaa, 2025; Lund, 2021; Spante et al., 2022; Vänninen et al., 2015) and expansive learning sessions (Augustsson, 2021; Bal et al., 2018; Engeström et al., 2013) within intervention, far less is known about how expansive learning continues in vivo as practitioners translate collectively designed models into everyday practice (Engeström, 2011)—especially when implementation involves both original CL participants and newcomers who enter the activity system after the intervention (Engeström, 2015). This study addresses this gap by investigating how implementation is articulated across different levels of activity and how it is distributed within an accelerated activity system.

The empirical context is a multicultural kindergarten in Northern Italy that adopted an open classroom model typical of the German tradition of the *offene Arbeit* (Lill, 2006, 2012), following a major renovation and a CL intervention (Morselli & Weyland, 2025). At the beginning of the new school year, nearly half of the staff were newcomers who had not participated in the CL but were nonetheless required to contribute to the implementation of the new model. Their rapid integration into a transforming activity system created a condition of accelerated development, in which intersubjective coordination, shared

understanding, and the stabilization of emerging routines had to be achieved under compressed temporal conditions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all staff members (N = 17), including CL participants, newly arrived teachers, special education teachers, and support staff. The analysis operationalizes Leont'ev's (1978) hierarchy of activity—activity, actions, operations—together with Engeström's (2015) components of the activity system, offering a fine-grained account of how expansive learning is enacted during implementation.

Findings show that implementation is predominantly articulated through collective, toolmediated actions, with a frequent overlap between actions and operations. This overlap indicates that implementation is not a linear progression but a dynamic process in which practitioners simultaneously redefine goals and stabilize emerging routines. Tools—both material and symbolic—play a central mediating role, while the community component is crucial for coordinating distributed work across shared spaces. Activity-level instances, although less frequent, appear primarily among experienced teachers and the school director, suggesting differentiated participation and leadership in sustaining the new model.

A key contribution of the study concerns the role of newcomers. Their integration into the activity system—without prior participation in the CL—generated both acceleration and friction: acceleration, because they brought fresh perspectives and initiated new adjustments; friction, because they had to appropriate the model while it was still being collectively shaped. This dynamic illustrates how expansive learning in accelerated activity systems depends on the capacity of the community to sustain intersubjective resonance despite uneven histories of participation.

By systematically integrating activity levels with activity system components, this study contributes a methodological and analytical framework for examining implementation processes beyond CL sessions. It advances CHAT-based research on temporality and development by showing how expansive learning unfolds under conditions of accelerated organizational and social change, and how newcomers become central actors in sustaining and reconfiguring the collective object of activity.

4892 - Irina Valentin (KINERGIA International Institute of Resilience and Human Development, Toronto): Acceleration Without Inheritance: AI, Development, and Alienation in Activity Systems

Cultural-historical activity research has long held that human development proceeds through participation in collectively organized activity. Vygotsky's account of mediated development and the activity-theoretical tradition that followed (Leontiev, Cole, Engeström) locate developmental change not in symbolic acquisition alone but in the embodied, co-regulated participation through which symbolic competence becomes integrated into the developing person. This paper asks what happens to this process when AI enters the activity system.

A concrete example anchors the question. A student may now acquire symbolic solutions through AI assistance without participating in the co-regulated social processes through

which developmental capacities are traditionally organized. Symbolic competence is delivered; the developmental work that normally accompanies its acquisition is bypassed.

Generalizing from this, the paper introduces the concept of regulatory inheritance: the transmission of collectively patterned modes of regulation through embodied, co-regulated participation in activity. Drawing on Vygotsky's developmental tradition, activity-theoretical accounts of mediation, developmental psychobiology (Porges, Schore), and enactive accounts of meaning-making (De Jaegher & Di Paolo), the paper specifies regulatory inheritance as the regulatory substrate through which symbolic acquisition becomes developmentally integrated.

AI-mediated interaction alters this relationship. By providing symbolic content and apparent competence faster than the embodied, co-regulated participation that normally accompanies development, AI produces a condition in which symbolic acquisition outpaces regulatory integration. Alienation is defined here as the growing separation between symbolic competence and the embodied regulatory organization normally developed through participation in collective activity. This is alienation in the activity-theoretical sense — separation of the person from the activity through which symbolic competence becomes their own — and it is a contemporary, AI-mediated case of the broader concern the conference theme names.

The paper contributes a developmental-mechanistic account of alienation as a mismatch between rates: the rate at which symbolic content is acquired and the rate at which regulatory integration can occur through participation. The implication is that counterforces to alienation must be sought not in reducing access to symbolic content, but in protecting and restoring the embodied, collectively patterned participation through which symbolic competence becomes developmentally integrated.

C. Workshops

4853 – Menno Wierdsma (Firda, Zuidlaren): Artful play for transformation: An exploration of how arts and play may be employed to share transformative episodes and invite others in taking a transformative activist stance

As a researcher and head of a research group aimed at Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in a VET institute in the Netherlands, I find myself constantly challenged in myriad ways. For instance, since research institutes as part of VET are relatively new phenomenon in the Netherlands, many different expectations live between colleagues, staff members and external partners with whom we work. Also, while the focus on education for sustainable development feels right and meaningful it also fuels a myriad of contradicting expectations. Combined with a strong sense of urgency that sustainability issues invoke, it is difficult to hold on to a strategy of slowing down for reflection and (re-)orientation on the trouble at hand. This strategy feels essential, especially in the accelerated activity systems on the borders of education, government and businesses that we engage in. This constant navigation of expectations feels like a permanent challenge and struggle. In response to these challenges the auto-ethnographic perspective taken by one of our researchers inspires

me to adopt a similar perspective to bring to light personal and societal subjective senses and configurations (Fleer, Gonzalez-Rey, and Verisov, 2017).

For instance, in a recent episode from my own development that I have named ‘uncloseting my inner feminist’ I learned that it is okay and necessary for me – a middle-aged white, heterosexual male – to take an explicit stance as a feminist. This, despite of the resonance I felt with feminism in both my personal life as a husband and father and as a professional working with sustainability issues. And while I did not have any qualms sharing that view in my personal life, I did find it difficult to take an explicit stance as a feminist as a researcher in a public talk. The experience of taking that stance despite feelings of anxiety related to not knowing how people would respond, combined with the appreciation for it that I received from others, has helped me to reconnect to my object for engaging in CHAT research and develop a stronger sense of self.

This and other episodes appear to have spurred a (re)development of personal, subjective configurations in such a way that they help keep me grounded in what sometimes feels like a whirlwind of intra- and interpersonal expectations and possibilities. Also, while it would be premature to expect a significant contribution to CHAT and its theories on subjectivity in at this stage, I do expect that this exploration has helped to sharpen myself as a research instrument for exploring the personal and professional challenges teachers and other education professionals face in developing ESD. Finally, I feel that sharing some of these episodes may be productive in inspiring others to become responsive and take a stance for what they believe in. However, I have also found that some experiences are still open wounds; too fresh to lay bare in a public manner. Also, I have experienced that a too explicit sharing of personal struggles can cause antipathy in others, causing them to (literally and figuratively) move away from me and – more importantly – the activity or trouble at hand.

In line with a recent argument from Nick Hopwood (Hopwood, 2024), I believe that the arts may offer possible answers to this contradictions and invite people to stay responsive to changes within ourselves and our communities. Drawing on work by van Rosmalen (van Rosmalen, 2024), I would like to explore how artistic and playful methods may be employed in interventions that we engage in for our research.

Participants in this workshop are invited to bring a source of inspiration for their engagement as activist researchers in CHAT. We will share these sources during the first part of the workshop. In the second part of the workshop we will explore the following question: how can we use the arts to share transformative episodes that lay bare subjective configurations in a playful manner?

4855 – Menno Wierdsma (Firda, Zuidlaren): A CL with a heterogenous coalition of education institutes and circular businesses: how to use mirror data to invite participants into analyzing their activity systems?

This workshop reports on a Change Laboratory (CL) and invites other researchers in CHAT to share their ideas on the particular challenges in this CL and if possible, relate them to similar issues in other CL's. This CL was conducted with teachers from three different course programs in VET and higher education and a program director for a small community of

circular startups. We started it in response to a question from one of the teachers. Her question was directed towards the lack of actual cooperation she experienced in their coalition, despite formal and informal intentions to do so. 18 months prior to the start of the CL, the teachers, their program directors and a coordinator of the startup community signed a cooperation agreement to set up a circular lab where students from the different courses programs would work and learn together on questions regarding the bussing circular economy. In spite of an in-house space for education within the community building that had been realized, in spite of students from the different course programs following some courses there, and in spite of good relations between the teachers and community coordinator involved, there was no actual cooperation between the education programs or with the startup.

In this CL, all participants are each part of different organizations and thus, activity systems (i.e. a circular startup company and three different education programs in two separate institutes). The key elements for these activity systems, as identified in the first three generations of CHAT (Engeström and Sannino, 2020) differ in their specific characteristics; they have different objects, subjects, rules, etc. These differences seem to make it difficult to identify the key elements associated with the contradictions underlying the heterogeneous coalition that is the ambition in this CL. As a result, I find it difficult to help the participants to move away from quick fixes and do a more thorough analysis of their activity systems and the underlying contradictions.

Possible explanations appear to point to the complexity of said initiatives where public, private and non-profit organizations try to work together in realizing utopia of sustainable and inclusive societies. The complexity of building heterogeneous coalitions like this one is illustrated in Engeström and Sannino's fourth generation of CHAT, which moves away from pointing out key elements in activity systems and instead suggests a warping of many, different activity systems. This suggests to employ the participants' expansive learning process as a unit of analysis instead of the key elements in their separate activity systems. [MW1.1] While this is an interesting point of view for a researcher, as an interventionist, I do not see how an analysis of their expansive learning process could help the participants in this CL.

Methods

This CL was conducted with three teachers, one program director and one researcher-interventionist. Data was gathered in one-on-one interviews, observation notes from the researcher and audio recordings of the CL sessions. The researcher analyzed each session prior to the next in order to provide an overview the process for the participants and provide mirror data. The mirror data were meant to provide first and second stimuli in an attempt to engender cycles of expansive learning with the participants using the principle of double stimulation. The data also served additional analyses to identify possible steps in double stimulation and expansive learning.

While first and second stimuli appear to be identifiable in the data as well as the first, steps in expansive learning, it proved difficult to direct the participants to a substantial analysis of their situation using these data. Although participants repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the CL process and mentioned their current initiatives, I feel that their numerous initiatives do not help a further integration of their activities in a durable cooperation.

However, I cannot seem to incite them into a more detailed analysis and address underlying contradictions. It appears that they do not share my experience of a lack of actual movement or transformation. Of course, this might as well be due to a false impression and lack of experience in conducting CL's on my part.

During the workshop, I will use the first five minutes to sketch the context and set-up of this CL, including the recent steps I have undertaken to help them move beyond the current. Next and after clarifying questions, participants are invited to reflect on the following question:

How can we use mirror data from a CL to confront participants with the lack of analysis of their context and the resulting lack of modelling new solutions?

4866 – José Middendorp (NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences): On phenomenology and cultural-historical (activity) theory

The workshop proposed here discusses a possible relationship between the ontology of being in phenomenology and the generative, emancipatory ontology of cultural-historical (activity) theory (CH(A)T). The question is how phenomenological methods can be of value within CH(A)T research? We will explore this by thoroughly analyzing and discussing an example from the researcher's counseling practice.

The example

Gina, a team leader in secondary education, is conducting phenomenological research in her own school. She is investigating what emerges to her as a manager in the school by describing a striking experience. She describes the experience from the first-person perspective. Gradually, she explores the experience in greater depth by adding observations and feelings; she brings to light the meaning of what is hidden (Maso, 2005). One of the outcomes of this self-reflection concerns Gina's realisation that setting boundaries in her relationship with colleagues is important in her role as a manager.

Gina becomes aware of who she is in her role as a manager and gains insight into her own attitude and beliefs. She then asks teachers and pupils about an experience at the school. An important element of the research is the ongoing critical reflection on Gina's own role, influence and subjectivity: 'At the heart of having an open presence is the capacity to be emotionally and bodily present, earnestly listening to the other (Finlay, 2009, p. 5). She also experiences that, in the presence of the other, she opens up thoughts, feelings and relations that otherwise remain unopened (Ibid., 2009).

The conversation

Within Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CH(A)T), there is talk of a generative, emancipatory ontology (González Rey, 2016; González Rey & Mitjans Martínez, 2025). This means that reality is not fixed, but is constantly generated, reshaped and transformed by human activity. The subject (the human) being oriented towards an object transforms practice and is simultaneously transformed by this process. An example is the use of AI in education. Seeing that students learn differently – and perhaps less thoroughly – when AI is used may encourage teachers to adapt assessment methods. Based on experiences with these assessment methods, the use of AI is also (once again) adapted and may even be adopted. The generative ontology in CH(A)T focuses on becoming and development.

Our introduction to CH(A)T has led us to the question: how does the generative, emancipatory ontology in CH(A)T relate to the ontology of being in phenomenology? To what extent can phenomenology be part of CH(A)T and vice versa?

Gina's phenomenological research makes her aware of her role as a manager and as a researcher. But for Gina, it does not stop with this awareness. The research prompts her to change her actions. The essence of the entire phenomenological research concerns the value of the relationship and paying attention to the other person. Gina is inspired and brings the question of a striking experience into development discussions. In doing so, she hopes to gain more insight into the other person (what does the other person want, what does the other person find important). This addition also makes it easier for her to connect and understand the other person better.

During the session

This example appears to go beyond the ontology of phenomenology, in which phenomena in lived experience appear to our consciousness (intentionality) in order to reveal being (ontology) (Maso, 2005). In CH(A)T, human consciousness and action are inextricably linked and arise from collective, sociocultural practices. The question is to what extent lived experience, an important methodological starting point of phenomenology, can contribute to the generative ontology of CH(A)T? Can lived experience, as understood in phenomenology, contribute to an active transformation of the world and ourselves? During the session, we will share knowledge and engage in a dialogue about lived experience as a starting point in the methodological approach of phenomenology and its relationship to the generative ontology of the cultural-historical activity theory (CH(A)T), using this example and the participants' own lived experiences as a basis.

4868 – Maria Guadalupe Ramirez, Daniel Hürzeler, Judith Hangartner (PH Bern): Strategies for activating expansive learning in the context of technology-led acceleration

In line with the growing 'platformization' of global education (Van Dijck et al., 2018), Swiss teachers are increasingly relying commercial platforms in their daily work. Whilst digital platforms are marketed as effective tools for improving learning and teaching, a growing body of critical research on educational technologies is raising concerns about the negative effects of these technologies. Critical accounts on platformization argue that commercial platforms must be viewed as pedagogical devices whose socio-technical logic and neoliberal values are reshaping public education (Grimaldi et al., 2023; Sefton-Green, 2021). Discussions on performativity and the materialisation of digital platforms show that issues relating to temporality, such as the work pace acceleration, are reinforced (Moraiti et al., 2025).

Our research and development project aims to encourage teachers in Swiss upper secondary schools to adopt a critical reflective approach to commercial platforms. To this end, we are conducting a Change Laboratory intervention in two institutionally related upper secondary public schools. Participants expressed concerns about the increasing acceleration of classroom practices within digital platforms, which is partly linked to the wider technological acceleration described by Rosa (2016). Through this intervention, we aim to analyze the

implications of digitally accelerated systems in schools and support teacher agency by fostering their pedagogical appropriation of digital technologies.

During the initial phases of the Change Laboratory sessions participant teachers engaged in active and productive discussions about the challenges posed by platform-based teaching. However, they struggled to reflect critically, take distance, and analyse their own activity system and platform-mediated practices. Teachers' discussions often reproduced prefabricated views of shared problems related to technology integration rather than opening new analytical perspectives. We hypothesize that this challenge may be related to the broader acceleration of educational activity systems promoted by the integration of emergent digital technologies. This acceleration could hinder teachers' activity of analysis within the Expansive Learning cycle.

Based on these experiences, the aim of the workshop is to reflect on the methodology of research interventions within the Change Laboratory, particularly how to create favorable conditions for expansive learning to emerge.

Structure of the workshops: In the introduction, we will present the interventional practices that we have already implemented during the initial phases of the Change Laboratory. Workshop participants will be invited to critically reflect on the intervention strategies – specifically those used in the questioning, analysis, and modelling phases – and to contribute their own insights to expand the repertoire of such strategies. The goal is to explore the conditions, content, and forms of interventions that are most effective in activating expansive learning.

4882 – Gillian Horribine (University of Dundee): Tuning in to Development: Exploring Podcast Learning as a Tool for Professional Community Through a CHAT Lens

Podcasts are growing in popularity as a teaching tool to support professional learning and development (Zhang et al., 2022; Kendrick et al., 2023; Ferrer et al., 2019; Gunderson & Cumming, 2022). Studies have shown their appeal as a means to increase access to teaching for engagement, representation and expression; to address geographical barriers restricting access to knowledge (Donison, 2022); to support online and distance learning (Kendrick et al., 2023); to democratise scientific information (Campeau et al., 2024); and to promote a sense of community and a 'levelling off' of expertise (Wendland, 2024). They have also been proposed as a potential 'boundary object' supporting transdisciplinary research (Cory & Boothby, 2021). However, being less regulated than many other knowledge outputs (Wendland, 2024), questions about how they may (or may not) mediate learning and community remain complex. As yet, this has not been explored in the context of Scottish Educational Psychology.

Within the conference themes of temporality, intersubjectivity, and social acceleration and Rosa's concept of social acceleration and its counterforces, the podcast is considered as a potential space of deceleration and resonance – a deliberately slower, more reflective mode of professional engagement within an increasingly accelerated professional landscape.

In January 2024, the presenter launched the only known Scottish independent podcast focused on Educational Psychology, conceived as a deliberate intervention: a space to discuss the complexities of professional practice and to foster collegiality among an increasingly dispersed community. The podcast has since produced ten episodes, including contributions engaging directly with Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Community engagement is at an early and emergent stage: preliminary listener survey data includes suggestions for building audience community and positive anecdotal feedback from practitioners provides a modest but meaningful empirical starting point for reflection on podcasting's potential as an intersubjective space.

This workshop opens with a brief introduction situating the podcast within the literature and the conference themes. Drawing on CHAT concepts, the presenter will sketch a provisional model of podcast learning as an activity system. The 25-minute collaboration phase invites participants to discuss, in small groups, the opportunities and risks that podcast learning presents - including the conditions under which it might support professional development, where it risks reinforcing rather than expanding knowledge boundaries and how community engagement might be intentionally developed.

Groups will be invited to share key insights in a brief closing exchange. The workshop aims to open a collaborative and critical dialogue about the role of emerging digital learning formats in professional communities, and to use CHAT as a generative lens for both understanding and developing them.

4896 – Daniel Hürzeler, María Guadalupe Ramírez, Judith Hangartner (PH Bern): Platform-driven acceleration of activity systems in Swiss primary schools

In line with the growing 'platformization' of global education (Van Dijck et al., 2018), Swiss teachers are increasingly relying commercial platforms in their daily work. Whilst digital platforms are marketed as effective tools for improving learning and teaching, a growing body of critical research on educational technologies is raising concerns about the negative effects of these technologies. Critical accounts on platformization argue that commercial platforms must be viewed as pedagogical devices whose socio-technical logic and neoliberal values are reshaping public education (Grimaldi et al., 2023; Sefton-Green, 2021).

Our research and development project aims to encourage teachers in Swiss public schools to adopt a critical reflective approach to commercial platforms, with a view to achieving self-determined use of technologies. To this end, we are conducting two separate Change Laboratory interventions with two groups of participants: primary and upper secondary school teachers. Participants in both sub-projects expressed concerns about the increasing acceleration of classroom practices with digital platforms, which is partly linked to some of them feeling alienated from their work (Rosa, 2016).

Through these interventions, we aim to analyze the implications of digitally accelerated systems, both in terms of the learning conditions in their classrooms and the development of their own teaching practices.

For ISCAR 2026, we propose two separated workshops based on empirical data collected through the initial phases of the Change Laboratory interventions during spring 2026. The workshops will focus on the concept of contradiction as an analytical tool. Identifying and articulating contradictions is a necessary precondition for Expansive Learning and systemic transformation, although it is also one of the most methodologically demanding steps in the Expansive Learning process (Colasante, 2024). We would like to share with the workshop participants our provisional analysis and discuss the identified contradiction in teachers' activity system.

Structure of the workshops: Following a brief contextual introduction to the main project, data from one of the two subprojects will be presented along with a brief description of the analytical process that was carried out within the Change Laboratory interventions. Participants will then work in small groups with transcribed extracts from the Change Laboratory sessions and other documents (e.g. interviews with participants, observation transcripts, images), to examine the identification and classification of contradictions using Engeström's typology (Engeström & Sannino, 2011). The workshops will conclude with a plenary discussion on the methodological challenges posed by working with the concept of contradiction in digitally accelerated (and platformized) activity systems.

D. Symposium: Meaning and Alienation in Soviet CHAT (Chair: Sascha Freyberg)

This symposium approaches the conference themes of temporality, intersubjectivity, and alienation from the perspective of the history and philosophy of the human sciences. It treats Cultural-Historical Activity Theory not only as a set of theoretical tools but as an object of philosophical and historical reflection, asking what problems animated this tradition from its origins and what resources – or unresolved tensions – it brings to its current engagement with acceleration, digital mediation, and the reorganization of intersubjective life.

The overarching problem is the relationship between personal sense and socio-cultural meaning, the tension of which, often framed as individual vs. society, has time and again been given as a reason for alienation. However, the task the symposium is to analyse the problem further by going back to foundational questions in Soviet sources. While alienation is rarely mentioned explicitly in the Soviet context, we regard the problem itself as a motivating one for – more or less – the whole tradition. Thus the shared aim of the symposium is to work out the attempts of disalienation the proponents undertook and the equivocations of alienation in the Soviet Marxist context: the concept operates simultaneously at the psychological level (e.g. the dissociation of meaning and personal sense within individual activity), the semiological level (the autonomization of the sign from the intersubjective activity that generated it), the cultural-philosophical level (the ideal form confronting subjects as alien objectivity), and the political-economic level (the commodity form as real abstraction, the products of human activity confronting their producers as an autonomous social force). These levels are not simply parallel; their structural continuity – and the points at which they diverge – is what the symposium seeks to discuss.

The Soviet researchers, whose work we draw on (from Vygotsky to Leontiev, Elkonin and Ilyenkov), did so under conditions that made the tension between subjects and society a central concern. Instead of simply juxtaposing both, CHAT researchers focussed on intersubjective, sign- and tool-mediated processes and raised the question how subjects and collectives hang together. However, this makes the question of meaning and alienation on abstract and concrete levels all the more pressing. The specific form this question takes today – in systems driven by real abstraction, commercial optimization, political-ideological manipulation, and algorithmic acceleration at a scale that forecloses individual exit – radicalizes rather than supersedes the problems they identified. The impossibility of opting out from realities produced by these processes was already implicit in the Soviet tradition's insistence that alienation is structural rather than merely experiential; making this implication explicit is one of the symposium's central tasks. Furthermore, the symposium takes seriously the reflexive implication of the problems CHAT raises about meaning, intersubjectivity, and alienation are problems that CHAT's own historical formation enacts, not merely analyzes. In this way we want to test the relations CHAT has to other theories of intersubjectivity, semiology and historical epistemology.

4878 – Sascha Freyberg (University of Hamburg): Abstraction, Play and Alienation: A Historical-Epistemological Reading of the Soviet Activity Approach

Historical epistemology offers a long-term developmental account of knowledge centred on the productive detachment of representations from their activity-genetic basis. What makes this detachment productive is not merely that representations achieve autonomy, but that in doing so they open a space of exploration irreducible to their origins: a symbol system, once constructed, implies more than what went into its construction — it carries collateral knowledge that can be unfolded through further activity with it. This surplus is what makes mathematics, writing, and other historically developed representational systems genuinely generative rather than merely cumulative. But the same account raises a question it cannot answer from within its own resources: what are the conditions under which this exploratory potential is actually available to those who inherit a given system of representations — and what forecloses it?

At first sight it seems that Soviet CHAT faces a similar problem since it rarely engaged explicitly with the problem of alienation. However the claim of this presentation is that it is genuinely motivated by the problem of alienation in terms of meaning and concept formation. Ilyenkov as its philosophical spokesperson makes this explicit on different levels of alienation. Knowledge pre-given as a system of ready-made verbal schemas cannot be explored, because exploration requires re-entering the intersubjective activity from which the representation originally emerged. The student then cannot unfold its implied meaning — not because the meaning is absent from the representation, but because the activity conditions for accessing it have not been reproduced. What is blocked is not application but appropriation: the capacity to move within a representational system as a genuinely productive space rather than a set of constraints to be navigated.

This reframes the problem of alienation at the level where the symposium's four registers — psychological, semiological, cultural-philosophical, and political-economic — meet. At the psychological level, alienation is the dissociation of personal sense from socio-cultural

meaning: the sign is performed without motivational integration. At the semiological level, it is the autonomization of the sign from the intersubjective activity that generated it — the point at which a representational system becomes opaque to those who operate within it. These two levels are not parallel but continuous: the semiological condition is what produces the psychological one, and both require an account of activity to explain how and why. Soviet CHAT offers this account, but only if the question is posed precisely: not what representations are missing, but what activity conditions allow a given system of representations to be genuinely explored rather than merely reproduced.

Elkonin's account of play crystallises the positive case. In play, the child substituting a stick for a horse does not merely follow a rule — it discovers the rule from within an activity that motivates the substitution. Sign and sense remain integrated not because they have been kept artificially close, but because the intersubjective activity that generated the sign is still present and operative. This is the condition under which the implied content of a representation becomes accessible — under which the child can explore what the role entails beyond what was explicitly stipulated. Theoretical concept formation, as Davydov showed, shares this genetic structure: the ascent from abstract to concrete is possible only when the learner can re-enter the activity from which the abstraction arose. What breaks down in verbalism — and in alienated learning more broadly — is precisely this re-entry: the representational form is reproduced, but the intersubjective activity that would make its implied content available is not.

Today attempts are being made to overcome the detachment by an increase of 'gamification'. This presents itself as a recovery of the motivational integration that play achieves — but the question for discussion is whether it operates at the level of activity structure or only at the level of motivational surface. Does it restore the conditions under which a representational system can be genuinely explored, or does it add engagement to an activity whose fundamental organisation — the reproduction of ready-made schemas — remains unchanged? This is ultimately a question about the structural continuity between the different levels of alienation that the symposium foregrounds: whether the form of play, detached from the intersubjective activity that makes it generative, retains any capacity to reconnect sign and sense in conditions of commodification, acceleration and ready-made systems— or whether it becomes one more instance of the schematic automation it"

4877 – Ketī Chukhrov (Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design): Disalienation: Vygotsky's Enigma of Internal Speech as Thought without Language

Disalienation: Vygotsky's Enigma of Internal Speech as Thought without Language.

Part of the Symposium "Meaning and Alienation in Soviet CHAT (Chair: Sascha Freyberg)
This presentation takes its lead from Vygotsky's overturn of the structuralist separation between signifier and signified and its implications for the question of alienation. According to Vygotsky there is no word (sign) without the sense underpinning it, i.e. the sign is not arbitrary and is complete only when the concept and meaning supporting it are ready. Post-structuralist theory often posits reason, consciousness and form-and-content unity as the modes of authority, rationality and control, - juxtaposing them to insanity, and unreason - and thus integrating alienation into subjectivity. Vygotsky - due to his discovery of the internal speech - subscribes to a converse standpoint. He argues, that inner speech - the

principal tool of transition from lower to higher mental functions – operates relatively independently of language. By means of dialectical operation, it grasps the content of things by means of forming the concept. Consequently, higher mental functions, stemming from internal speech, also develop relatively independent from language and are more shaped by social surrounding and volition, than pure intellect. This indicates that mental derangement is not an obstacle for the transition from lower to higher mental functions. So, that even the states of insanity leave the possibility to form or restore thought through the effort of will.

4873 – Lena Kreymann (Berlin): The psychological catastrophe and how to escape it: (Inter)subjectivity, sense, and meaning in Leontiev

In Leontiev, there is an interesting juxtaposition: On the one hand, he argues that consciousness only emerges as a result of joint activity, under the conditions of the division of labor. This becomes particularly clear when looking at Leontiev's view of phylogenetic development, in which he analyzes the relationship between the level of activity and the level of psychic reflection throughout evolution. Tool use and collective labor, only found in humans, are the foundation for becoming aware of one's own actions and for developing abstract notions as socially constituted generalizations. This is the foundation for the distinction between a personal sense that guides the individual's activities without a supraindividual existence and meaning as a generalization of reality based on shared social experience. In this sense, sociality and intersubjectivity are the prerequisites for individual consciousness and thus also for subjectivity, understood as the partiality of consciousness.

On the other hand, although intersubjectivity precedes consciousness, the personal sense brings about its partiality. The talk explores this complicated relationship between intersubjectivity and individual consciousness, arguing that his distinction between meaning and sense can contribute to understanding why certain social developments are difficult to grasp conceptually: Leontiev demonstrates how socially constituted meaning falls short of personal sense in class societies. The conceptual abstractions captured in socially established meanings, available to the individual, no longer capture what is already reflected in the individual's personal sense.

According to Leontiev, the constant divergence between meaning and sense, lying at the heart of constant alienation, can have devastating consequences. It makes the individual susceptible to distorted or fantastic representations. Ultimately, the disintegration of consciousness can result in a psychological catastrophe. Thus, this distinction between sense and meaning provides an often neglected and underestimated tool of grasping the reflection of social contradictions in the individual consciousness, thereby providing a bridge between disciplines concerned with societal developments and the individuals' minds. Yet, the distinction has also been subject to criticism. The presentation picks up on Holzkamp's suggestions to differentiate the meanings of "meaning" and explores whether this can both help to explain the relationship between intersubjectivity and subjectivity, as well as to make the sense-meaning distinction more useful.

E. Poster

4844 – Ruth Frans (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Lysanne te Brinke (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Arjen de Vetten (Leiden University): Between performance and meaningful development: reframing the object of schooling through a Change Laboratory

In a rapidly changing and increasingly digitalised world, the role of schools is becoming both more complex and more significant. As knowledge becomes more accessible and partially automated, schools are uniquely positioned to support what is deeply human and relational: the development of identity, meaning, and a sense of contribution (Kiang et al., 2020). This is particularly salient during adolescence, a critical period in which young people explore who they are, what matters to them, and how they can contribute positively to the world (Crocetti, 2026; Fuligni 2019).

At the same time, schools experience a persistent tension between preparing students for standardized assessments and diplomas and supporting longer-term developmental processes related to identity and purpose formation (Biesta 2009, Damon 2008). From a Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) perspective (Engeström, 2015), this tension can be understood as a contradiction within the activity system of schooling, where competing objects shape educational practice. Such contradictions can generate opportunities for expansive learning and the emergence of new forms of activity (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Grounded in CHAT and Change Laboratory methodology, this study investigates how teachers and students identify, analyse, and respond to these contradictions, and how an expanded object of schooling may emerge through collective reflection and redesign. The intervention takes place in a bilingual secondary school in Rotterdam during the 2025–2026 school year and consists of five Change Laboratory sessions involving eight teachers and five students. Participants collaboratively analyse current practices and systemic tensions, examine their historical roots, and explore possibilities for transforming educational activity.

Preliminary insights suggest the emergence of an expanded object that can be described as supporting students in “pathway exploration”: engaging in processes of exploration, questioning, and iteration through which young people discover possible directions for their lives and develop a sense of meaning, relevance, and contribution. Participants identify multiple leverage points for advancing this object, including pedagogical practices (mediating tools and rules), collaboration among teachers and other school staff (division of labour), changing roles, assessment tools, and the physical environment. These findings illustrate how transformative agency may be expressed through different components of the activity system while remaining oriented toward a shared object.

This study contributes to the ISCAR theme by examining how contradictions within educational systems can become resources for expansive learning and collective transformation. It highlights the potential of reimagining schools as relational ecosystems that support both academic achievement and adolescents' development of purpose in an increasingly digitalised world.

4849 – Arjen de Vetten, Marije Schneider, Indira Day (Leiden University): Centuries old and still going strong? Transforming a large bachelor of law curriculum using a Change Laboratory

The Change Laboratory (CL) methodology has the potential to be a powerful instrument to facilitate transformation (Engeström, 2011). In higher education, CL's have been widely applied (e.g., FriedrichNel & Garraway, 2025; Scahill & Bligh, 2025; Wei & Sannino, 2026). However, these studies only established participants' intentions for transforming educational practices, neglecting whether their intentions resulted in actual transformation. The aim of our study is to investigate the extent to which a CL results in actual transformation of a higher education curriculum.

The CL takes place in the context of a Bachelor's of Law degree. It has an educational culture shaped over centuries, making attention to the issue of temporality – one of the conference's themes – paramount. The bachelor suffers from high dropout rates, low student engagement, and high work pressure among academic staff. The CL team, comprising two lecturers, three students and two researcher-interventionists, collected extensive qualitative and quantitative mirror data. The actual-empirical analysis of these data resulted in the formulation of a primary contradiction in the object of the activity between earning study credits and personal and professional bildung (general development) of students. This contradiction pervades the entire activity system and is able to explain the frictions and disturbances identified in the curriculum.

At ISCAR, we discuss the analysis of the mirror data, the resulting activity system and primary contradictions and ask for feedback on the historical analysis, scheduled for fall 2026.

4852 – Ilona van Heijst (University of Amsterdam): Deceleration in accelerated school activity systems: Towards a conceptualization of inquiry and change through CHAT

Society is rapidly changing, requiring schools to continuously adapt in order to provide high-quality and up-to-date education. In this context, there is an increasing emphasis on drawing on research-based knowledge while preserving teachers' professional judgement and autonomy. This calls for the development of an inquiry-oriented stance, enabling teachers not only to apply existing knowledge but also to critically investigate and adapt their own practices (Amels-De Groot, 2021). This requires deceleration that enables deep investigation and forms of alienation to enable critical reflection on their routinized practice with renewed curiosity. To support these processes, schools need organizational structures and cultures that actively facilitate knowledge sharing and utilization by providing time, resources, and guidance to cultivate a research culture (Arteaga et al., 2024)

This poster presents a planned study of an Educational Research Lab (Gaikhorst et al., 2025) in which teachers from different secondary and vocational schools conduct practice-based research under the guidance of researchers. As teacher-researchers, they need to become familiar with how such a network functions (Trust, 2017). In addition, they also need to develop research skills within the network while simultaneously working to embed the knowledge generated through their research within their school contexts. From a cultural-

historical perspective, this raises questions about how learning can extend beyond individual development toward the transformation of activity systems through processes of expansive learning. In this regard, a Change Laboratory appears particularly suited, as it provides a structured and iterative approach to support such transformations (Engeström, 2019). In this study we will investigate how research conducted by teacher-researchers acquires meaning and function for collective learning and practice development within schools. Drawing on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), the study will follow three to four schools participating in the WOA. Data collection will include interviews with teacher-researchers and school leaders, longitudinal activity-system mapping sessions, and discussions focused on goals, tensions, boundary objects, and the embedding of research outcomes in school practice. The analysis will focus on the conditions under which participation in an external research network contributes to collective and potentially expansive learning within school activity systems.

Rather than presenting findings, the poster is intended as a space for collective conceptual inquiry. Participants will be invited to explore how an external research network such as this Educational Research Lab, can be conceptualized within the framework of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)? Can it be understood as a Change Laboratory, an emerging or temporary activity system, as a boundary crossing space between activity systems or as something else? And under what conditions can it be considered a fully developed, historically formed activity system? Where do the boundaries lie for designating such a configuration as an activity system, and what was it prior to this point? During the poster session we will explore, drawing on this study, where the boundaries of such conceptualizations lie.

The poster will present visual representations of the planned study and the Educational Research Lab. Visitors will be invited to contribute their perspectives using sticky notes, indicating which CHAT concepts they consider most appropriate for conceptualizing this network and where they perceive the boundaries between these concepts. In this way, the poster aims to foster dialogue on the conceptual boundaries of Change Laboratories, activity systems, and other forms of networked learning, while simultaneously informing the theoretical and methodological development of the planned study.

4875 – Georgios Koutsogiannis, Maolis Dafermos (University of Crete): Psychological Systems and Adolescence: Rethinking Personality Development Dialectically within Cultural-Historical Theory

This study investigates how personality development in adolescence can be conceptualized beyond dominant trait-based and reductionist models in contemporary psychology. The central research question concerns the role of emotions in the systemic reorganization of personality during adolescence and the extent to which Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory provides conceptual resources for understanding this developmental process. Based on a historical-conceptual methodology, our theoretical review aims to reconstructs key dimensions of Lev S. Vygotsky's research program, focusing on the concepts of psychological systems, developmental crises, *perezhivanie*, the unity of affect and intellect and their interrelations. Particular attention is given to Vygotsky's later writings such as the

unfinished work on emotions, as well as to contemporary developments in cultural-historical and developmental research.

The analysis suggests that personality should not be understood as a collection of stable traits but as an emergent and developing concrete system of interrelated psychological functions. From this perspective, adolescence appears as a critical period of qualitative transformation in which conceptual thinking, imagination, motives, and emotions are reorganized into new systemic relations. The development of self-consciousness enables adolescents to orient themselves toward future possibilities, ideal forms, and meaningful goals. Vygotsky's acmeistic approach asserts that emotions are shown not merely to accompany development but to participate actively in the restructuring of the adolescent's system of concepts and in the formation of agency.

The study further argues that Vygotsky's notion of development "in terms of drama" offers a productive framework for understanding the contradictions through which personality develops (and degenerates) in relation to the social environment. At the same time, the analysis identifies theoretical limitations within the cultural-historical framework and discusses possibilities for dialogue with contemporary interdisciplinary research on adolescence, personality, and development in the modern era. The findings highlight the continuing relevance of a developmental, relational, and dialectical understanding of personality under social and digitally mediated conditions.

4880 – Bianca Dusseljee (Firda, Leeuwarden): A joint project of becoming – Guiding professional development in situations of uncertainty and transformation

During ISCAR 2024 in Rotterdam, Anna Stetsenko called for more radical and engaged forms of research that move beyond describing development towards actively participating in it. This PhD project takes up that call by attempting to study development in a way that is congruent with the theory it draws on. Together with my supervisors, this has meant taking seriously the challenge of putting ourselves 'on the line', by engaging with the process from within.

Inspired by Stetsenko's notion of development as a "joint project of becoming", this project explores how subjectivity develops both intra- and interpersonally. Inspired by the work of, among others, Lev Vygotsky, Yrjö Engeström and Fernando González Rey, we explore the idea that development unfolds in how situations are lived (*perezhivanie*), and takes shape in dynamic processes of subjectivity.

The focus is on the role of subjectivity in the development of agency, and in how this development can be guided in situations of uncertainty. The research consists of interconnected studies, including analytical auto-ethnography, tracing my own development as both someone being guided and as a guide. This makes it possible to explore deeply how subjectivity develops in relation, and what guidance can look like in professional contexts where lived emotional tension is part of development. We ask ourselves and others:

How do we guide ourselves and others in shaping development in situations of uncertainty, while navigating and shaping development in ourselves, others, and the activity in which we are simultaneously becoming?

The poster will include selected episodes from this ongoing research, using short narrative fragments and visual representations to make lived experience and development tangible. A first conceptual model will also be shared, exploring the relationship between lived emotional tension, subjectivity and the development of agency. These are not presented as final outcomes, but as starting points for dialogue and shared reflection.

In conversation I would value different perspectives on how lived experience can inform theory. However, in line with our subjective approach to research, I am mostly interested: What does this invoke in you?

4888 – Benjamin Roth (Goethe University Frankfurt): How AI affects us cognitively and socially – a literary study about Dietmar Dath

The development of AI is broadly discussed and theoretized. Not only psychologists, but also linguists, mathematicians and social theorists reflect on the innovation process. The German author and journalist Dietmar Dath bundles a lot of these reflections in his journalistic and literaric work. A psychological reflection of Dath's insights, theses as well as his working methods might bring new impulses for a Critical Psychological or Cultural-Historical approach on AI. Since AI itself is a literary actor (large language models) and its cognitive and social consequences are mediated through produced literature. They can be reflected through literature as well.

Subject: The literary study, being part of a Master study of Aesthetics at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, analyzes discourses and literary depictions of social conflicts about AI in the works of Dietmar Dath. These conflicts, but also its effects and conditions, can be reviewed through a psychological lense. The conference could be a possibility to discuss the study and think about following research – in psychology and in other disciplines.

Research Interest: The motive of this study was to grasp the societal innovation process around AI through methods of literary studies via the case of Dietmar Dath. Therefore, journalistic articles were examined, the novel *Venus siegt* was examined with tools of literary and politological conflict analysis and the gained insights were compared to AI-discourses especially in literary studies. For this project, the third step would be replaced by a translation of the insights of the first two steps into psychological theses and questions, shaped by the terminology of Critical Psychology and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory. Maybe this translation can offer new ways to ask, think, research, experiment and act about AI from a psychological perspective.

Questions: How is AI discussed, depicted and conflictualized in Dietmar Dath's works? How can we translate this literary and conflict study about AI into terms of (e.g.) ability to act? Which (theoretical, methodical) tools does this two-side perspective offer for CP-research?

Methods: The investigation consists of three working steps: The first step is the reading of Dath's discourses and depictions of AI via literary methods and aesthetic categories as well as a conflict analysis of the novel *Venus siegt!*, happens during the finalization of the Master theses between March and Juli 2026. The second step, the selection of (more) psychological matters and their re-read through a Critical Psychological or Cultural-historical lens, the translation of these issues into psychological ones, happens between August and the first half of September 2026. The third step, the preparation and presentation of the results at the ISCAR-conference for feedback, discussion, clarification of following questions and coordination of further research, happens between late September and early October 2026.

Theoretical background: The project consists of three working steps and draws from different theoretical backgrounds. The first step is shaped by theories and methods of literary studies, especially discourse analysis, theory of argument and questioning, intertextuality and science fiction studies. A special role plays the political conflict analysis. For the translation, theories and terminologies of Critical psychology – especially the distinction of general and restrictive ability to act, justification discourses and social mediation of psychological phenomena – are important. During the translation, tools of interdisciplinarity – analogies, transfer of terminologies, import of methods, change of perspective – are being used. In the final step, the presentation of the result, didactics are irreplaceable to visualize, reduce, structure, present and secure the results and to develop a discussion in a rather reflected than unconscious way.

4889 – Benjamin Roth (Goethe University Frankfurt): Learning and Development in today's German highschools – a case study about acceleration, alienation, AI and participation

Relevance: The current generation of highschool students faces AI almost everywhere and uses it under critical conditions: A global systemical crisis, war, poverty and authoritarianism, high pressure at school and furthermore medialization of everyday life. The terms acceleration and alienation fit to this situation more than before. Critical psychology can help to grasp these pressures and to evaluate students' abilities to act in this situation. On the other hand, it can gain insights and sharpen its tools by investigating the case. For a case study, it is important to do attempt a more participative research. Since Critical Psychologists need to research people by interacting with them instead of just observing and judging them. On the other hand, students need researchers to collaborate with them instead of working around or over them – or, worse, tricking them.

Subject: The subject of this case study would be an interrogation of approximately 75 highschool students in 11th grade of a German Integrated General School (IGS). The issues of the interrogation would be acceleration and alienation in education, everyday life and politics; the use of AI in schools; the experience and perception of possibilities to participate in decisions and actions. The change of these perceptions and underlining orientations via disclosure and discussion of the results of the interrogation as a byproduct of participative research would be a matter, too.

Research Interest: The case study aims to find out how students nowadays perceive their education, everyday life and politics: critical, affirmative, contradicting, confused, ...? How they really think about and work with AI in school and other situations. How they really think

about their possibilities to participate. And what they say when they start discussion these topics with each other openly.

Questions: How do students perceive acceleration and alienation in education, everyday life and politics? How do students define their relation to AI as a learning tool? How do students experience participation and its effects on themselves? How do students reflect on these issues when discussing them afterwards?

Methods: This project consists of several working steps. First, the construction and handout of questionnaires in three high school classes. Second, the processing of the questionnaires be the researcher himself. Third, the presentation and discussing of these mid-results with the students and the documentation of this collective discussion. Fourth, the processing of the discussion and the reflection of the questionnaires by the researcher. Fifth, the preparation and presentation of the results at the ISCAR conference for further discussion, the coordination for further research and the handout of used tools to the colleagues for more research. Sixth, the information of the students about the results of the overall process, e.g. via a paper in scientific journal.

Theoretical background: The different working steps draw from different theoretical backgrounds. For the construction of the questionnaires, tools of questionnaire construction and quantitative research offer the framework, terms from (marxist) sociology of work – e.g. work, work education, acceleration, alienation, discipline, competition – fill the frame with content. The terminology of Critical psychology – general vs. restrictive ability to act, justification discourse, social mediation of psychological phenomena – influences the construction of the questionnaire as well as the discussion of the results with the students and colleagues. Talking about AI, a conscious understanding of the phenomenon and its parts – machine learning, generative ai, prompt engineering, training through feedback, algorithm, hallucinations, bias – is important too. The research attempts to be participative and tries different tools of participative research: transparency, collective reflection, empowerment through discussion, acknowledgement of experience-based knowledge. Finally, didactical considerations - to visualize, reduce, structure, present and secure the results and to develop a discussion – play a role during the reflection with students as well as during the presentation at the ISCAR-Conference.

4880 – Bianca Dusseljee (Firda, Leeuwarden): A joint project of becoming – Guiding professional development in situations of uncertainty and transformation

During ISCAR 2024 in Rotterdam, Anna Stetsenko called for more radical and engaged forms of research that move beyond describing development towards actively participating in it. This PhD project takes up that call by attempting to study development in a way that is congruent with the theory it draws on. Together with my supervisors, this has meant taking seriously the challenge of putting ourselves ‘on the line’, by engaging with the process from within.

Inspired by Stetsenko’s notion of development as a “joint project of becoming”, this project explores how subjectivity develops both intra- and interpersonally. Inspired by the work of, among others, Lev Vygotsky, Yrjö Engeström and Fernando González Rey, we explore the idea

that development unfolds in how situations are lived (*perezhivanie*), and takes shape in dynamic processes of subjectivity. The focus is on the role of subjectivity in the development of agency, and in how this development can be guided in situations of uncertainty. The research consists of interconnected studies, including analytical auto-ethnography, tracing my own development as both someone being guided and as a guide. This makes it possible to explore deeply how subjectivity develops in relation, and what guidance can look like in professional contexts where lived emotional tension is part of development. We ask ourselves and others: *How do we guide ourselves and others in shaping development in situations of uncertainty, while navigating and shaping development in ourselves, others, and the activity in which we are simultaneously becoming?*

The poster will include selected episodes from this ongoing research, using short narrative fragments and visual representations to make lived experience and development tangible. A first conceptual model will also be shared, exploring the relationship between lived emotional tension, subjectivity and the development of agency. These are not presented as final outcomes, but as starting points for dialogue and shared reflection. In conversation I would value different perspectives on how lived experience can inform theory. However, in line with our subjective approach to research, I am mostly interested: *What does this invoke in you?*

Conference Proceedings ISCAR 2026 Berlin

The ISCAR 2026 Berlin team (Central Europe Regional Group) is preparing an edited volume featuring selected papers presented at the conference. The volume is scheduled for publication in late 2027 as part of the *International Cultural-Historical Human Sciences* (ICHHS) series by Lehmanns Verlag Berlin (<http://www.ich-sciences.de>). Submitted chapters will undergo a peer-review process. Further information on the submission timeline, length requirements and formatting guidelines will be provided in due course.



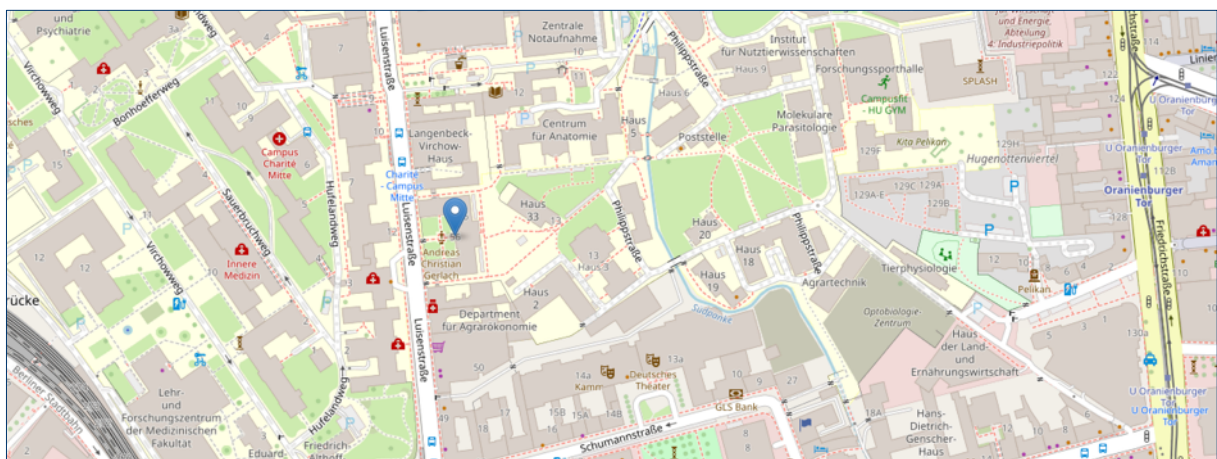
Conference Venue

The conference will take place at Humboldt University of Berlin. The venue is the building of the former Royal Veterinary School (**Humboldt Graduate School**) at **Luisenstraße 56 in Berlin-Mitte**. All rooms are wheelchair accessible.



Nearby Stations:

- Invalidenpark (Tram M10, M5, M8)
- Charité – Campus Mitte (Bus 147)
- Oranienburger Tor (U6)
- Hauptbahnhof/Main Station (about 1,3 km by feet)



OpenStreetMap: <https://www.openstreetmap.org/?mlat=52.5251897&mlon=13.3797086#map=17/52.525190/13.379709>



ISCAR 2026

Central Europe

Conference Schedule

Thursday (1 Oct. 2026)

- 09:00-12:00 Pre-Conference: CHAT & CL
- 13:00-14:00 Registration
- 14:00-14:30 Welcome - Thomas Hoffmann (HU Berlin)
- 14:30-15:30 Keynote - Sanne Akkerman (Utrecht University)
- 15:30-16:00 Coffee break
- 16:00-17:30 Parallel Sessions A1-A3
- 17:30-18:00 Coffee Break
- 18:00-21:00 Open Space/Evening Reception/Poster Walk

Friday (2 Oct. 2026)

- 08:30-09:00 Welcome 2nd Day
- 09:00-10:30 Parallel Sessions B1-B4
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00-12:30 Parallel Sessions C1-C3
- 12:30-13:00 Snack Break
- 13:00-14:30 Parallel Sessions D1-D3
- 14:30-15:00 Review/Outlook/Farewell

