

## **Learning08: Methodologies and Practices for Approaching Learning as a Social Phenomenon Inside and Outside of School**

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### **Reading-aloud of picture books at kindergarten: the influence of interaction on children's learning and development**

This paper focuses on situated learning within Dutch kindergarten classes and specifically pays attention to the interactions that occur during reading-aloud of picture books. We will show that certain interactions might be useful in the learning process of children. This might provide valuable material to teachers how to optimize the learning and development of kindergarteners. So, the question that is central to this presentation is as follows: “*Which interactional practices that occur before, during and after reading-aloud sessions at kindergarten, are instructive for the development of kindergarteners?*”

The rationale behind this study is based on the theory of *situated learning*, as for example formulated by Wenger (1998) and Lave & Wenger (1991). This theory states that ‘incidental’ learning takes place in certain communities or situational contexts. Lave and Wenger (1991) characterize the communities in which this kind of learning takes place as *communities of practice* and the manner of participation in these communities of practice as *legitimate peripheral action*. This describes learning as the development of ways of participating from ‘peripheral’ to ‘full’. The novices in these communities of practice are not expected to participate fully, so that is why it is legitimate.

The concepts described above seem pre-eminently useful to characterize the different ways of learning at school. As Wenger (1998) states ‘schools gain relevance not just by the content of their teaching – much of which can be acquired just as well in other circumstances – but by the experiments of identity that students can engage in while there’.

In kindergarten classes learning still takes place in a non programmed manner (‘incidental’ learning). So these classes are especially useful to be analyzed as specific communities with practices for children that are instructive in different degrees. In addition, the activity of reading-aloud picture books seems to be a perfect method to create a community of practice in which events and situational contexts can be explored that are outside the direct environment of the classroom. The teacher is considered the expert interacting with the novice children. Utilizing picture books enables the children to use their imagination and to interact about these events and situational contexts.

This framework will be used to show how children informally learn various concepts and develop several competencies. How they learn and what knowledge and experience they achieve depends on the interaction that takes place before, during and after the reading-aloud sessions.

Brouwer & Wagner (2004) have shown that situated language learning can be analyzed in conversational interaction of students and their teachers. In this study we also use conversation analytic methods. The video recordings of reading-aloud sessions, that are transcribed and analyzed, were collected during a longitudinal reading-aloud program at kindergarten classes.

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### **References**

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