

Evidence-based innovative and inclusive practice of psychologists in educational settings. Analysis of programmes impact on schooling and strategic competences of professional agents.

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Evidence-based innovative and inclusive practice of psychologists in educational settings. Analysis of programmes impact on schooling and strategic competences of professional agents

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ARGENTINA

Research Project UBACYT 2012-2015



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Aims

1. The aim is to analyse the process and the outcomes of *outreach programmes*, displayed in Buenos Aires and La Plata Argentine State Universities, addressed to develop and evaluate *innovative practice* in order to *enhance learning and living together in educational settings of secondary level*, specially those in which are being educated people with socio-economic vulnerability, after decades of inequality and cultural diversity. Bridging and interweaving Psychology as a scientific profession with Schools and other Settings of two major Argentine cities—Buenos Aires and La Plata –.
2. The *follow-up study* analyse the *effects of the programmes*, from the view of different social actors, on: a) literacy, b) violence, c) behavior and learning, d) school-families joint construction, f) social access to better opportunities, g) integration of “special educational needs” pupils, and h) re-mediation of collective memory for learning by social experience.

Professional learning

- We also analysed *professional learning* of *psychologists in modeling, novel graduates* and *experts, taking part* and *being part* of outreach Extension programmes in educational settings outside University .
- We focus changes in knowledge, competence and identity during their embedding in *zones of social construction* with teachers, pupils, principals and parents.
- In this view, we analyse their *praxis* through the process of *crossing the boundaries* (Engeström, 2001) between Psychology and Education, and between Universities and Schools.
- Therefore, *diversity* and *externality* of “the other” system, agency and/or discipline, become a *drive* to increase visibility of the daily invisible dimensions and interactions in “our” activity system, and bring “fresh air” to the communicative reflection of each other.

Professional Learning *from* and *for* working

- The **contradictions that cross each activity system** are pushed toward agents *learning by experience* and may produce an *expansive cycle* of change, through a **“reflective communication” structure of inter-agency** between the two different systems (Engeström et al., 1997).
- The gaze of “others” discovers the things that have been naturalized by us, without realizing it, and it makes possible the process of **“breaking away” and “opening out”** (Engeström, 2009)
- **Mental Models of Psychologists Professional Practice in Education** are related to **purposes**, representations and **experiences** of undergraduate, novel graduates, and experts, linked to the **bonds** they can build **with** teachers, pupils, principals and parents, while **working** in schools and other settings.

Categories and links

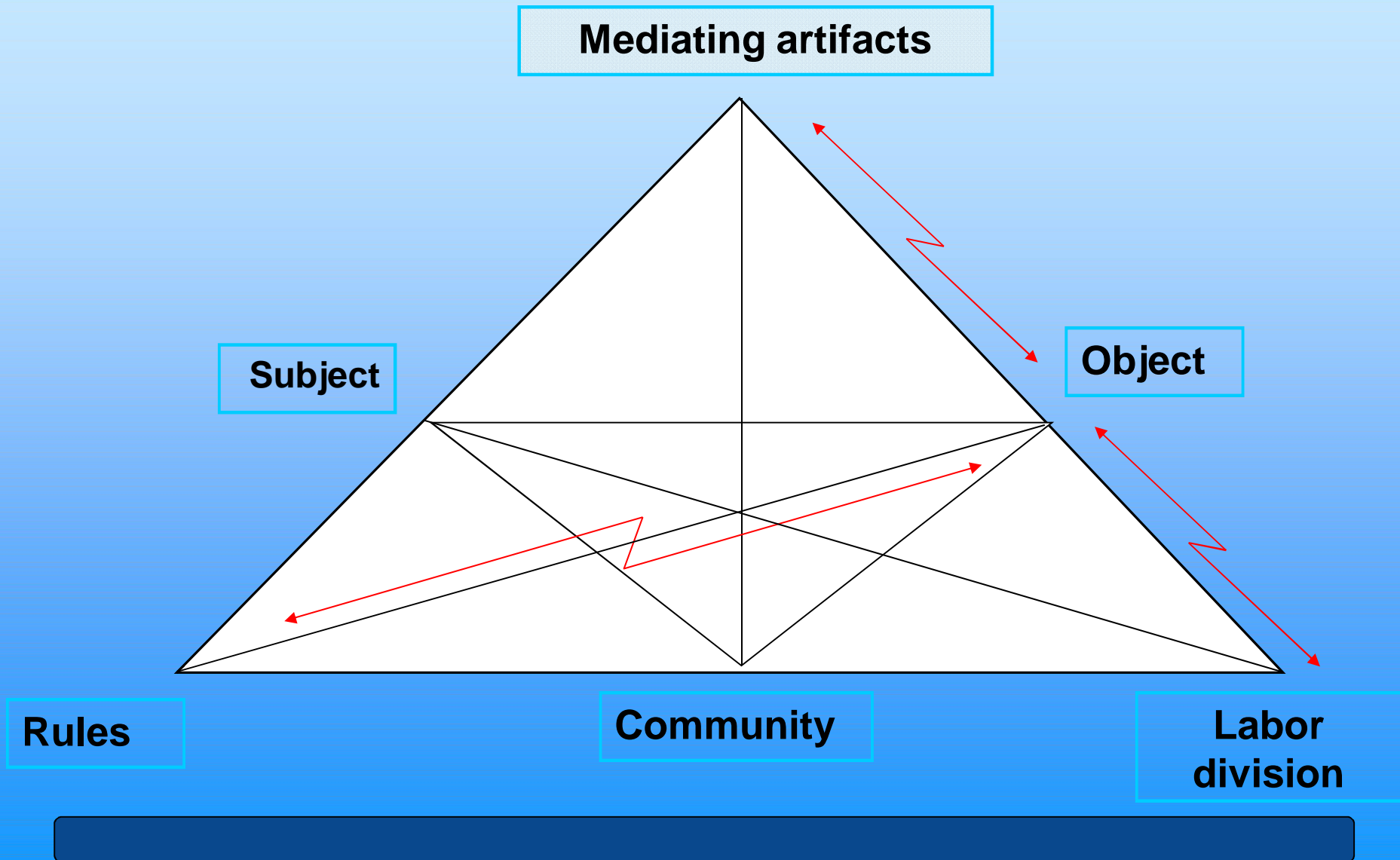
Mental Models of Professional Practice are also related to meanings and senses they reciprocally appropriate or negotiate in each context with social actors of school community.

- Using and changing cultural artifacts of mediation, and evidence based practice in a specific sociocultural context – with ecological validity -, psycho-educational agents may change their *representational system* of problems and interventions at schools with *systematic reflective communication and joint construction* with other social actors.

Through the process of *internalization and externalization* continuously displayed into each *activity system* (Engeström, 2001), contradictions sometimes shape opportunities for the system to change and sometimes only the reproduction of the system.

Mediational Expanded Basic Triangle

(ENGESTROM, 1991)



Third generation of the Cultural-Historic Activity Theory: between Universities and Schools (Engeström, 2001)

136 *Y. Engeström*

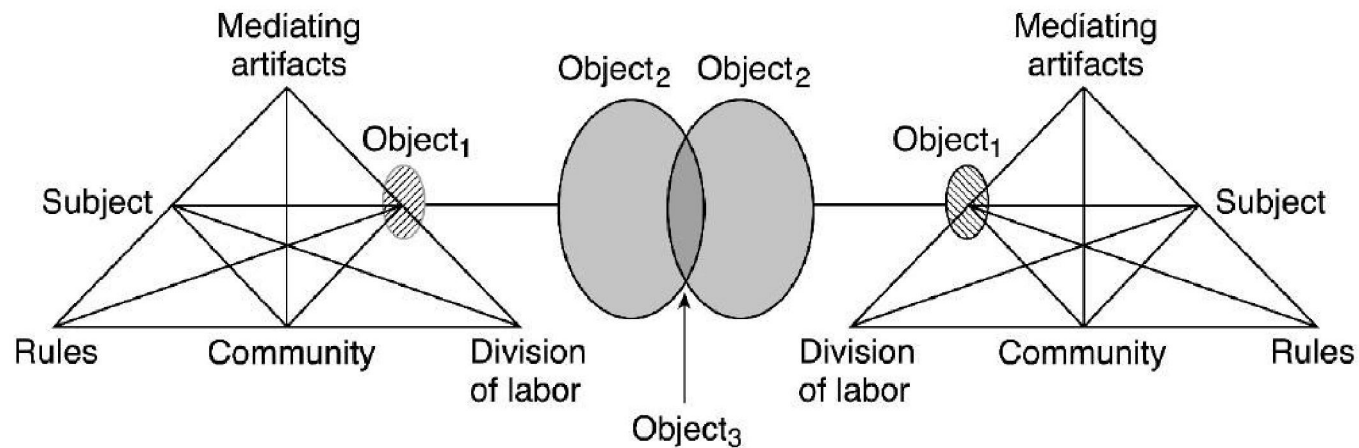


FIG. 3. Two interacting activity systems as minimal model for the third generation of activity theory.

Engeström (2001) article, " **Expansive learning at work: toward an activity theoretical reconceptualisation**"

Methodology

Deep Interviews and Questionnaires about Situation-Problems of Professional Intervention in Educational Contexts (Erausquin, 2006) were developed at the beginning and at the end of 2012 and 2013

Annual Outreach Programme for Inclusive Education by Exchanging Knowledge and Experience on Learning and Living Together between University and Secondary Schools.

School and Classroom Observations weekly records were developed along the Programme.

For Psychologists teaching Psychology, two instruments evaluated didactic, evaluative and metacognitive competencies before and after experience.

The instruments were applied to 200 Undergraduate and Graduate Agents - Psychologists and Psychology Teachers – and to 50 School Actors - teachers, principals, pupils and Counseling Agents of six Secondary Schools -. Two State Universities financed Extension Projects, during the two years in two main Argentine cities .

One of the Instruments: Questionnaire on Situation-Problems and Intervention Activity (Erausquin, 2006)

- 1 - **Think** in a *situation-problem* of your own experience in which you have participated as a *professional psychologist –or... a teacher, principal, pupil or parent* - in this educational context.
 - a. **Describe** the problem mentioning the most significant elements of the situation.
 - b. **Explain** the elements concerning to the *history* of the problem - before the intervention - and concerning to the *context* in the moment of the intervention.
- 2 - **Tell** each one of the **actions** through which you intervened in the problem, detailing the moments and steps of the intervention.
 - a. Who **decided** the intervention?.
 - b. Which were the **aims** in the intervention?
 - c. **On what or whom** did you intervene? Why?
- 3 - Which **tools** were used. Why?
- 4 - Which **result** was achieved with that intervention? To what do you **attribute** that result?

Follow-up Study (1)

- The follow-up study evaluated the *mediational effects* of the programmes on:
- A) **Literacy**: secondary pupils enhanced writing and reading competence through *participative appropriation* of information and meanings from their own research about “adolescence and youth world nowadays and in the past”, and by writing about their own significant life experience inside/outside school with *reciprocal teaching* and teachers *scaffolding* of *discourse genres* through a *dialogic curriculum* framework (PEA and SA views)
- B) **Violence**: living together at school became more peaceful, while adolescents and young people faced problems and conflicts by “freezing the ball” and speaking to each other about reasons and feelings implied, constructing agreements among peers and with teacher and authorities, using audio-visual resources like videos, photographs, for reflecting, but also realizing their own behavior and thinking during apprenticeship (PEA and SA views).

Follow-up Study(2)

- D) **Pupils behavior and learning**: More Reflective Communication and Joint Construction among pupils and with teachers and principals, develop skills of auto-mastering and auto-control by the systematic comprehension and participation in *meaningful social activities or social events* (Rogoff, 1997), with pauses for thinking and speaking that take care of the task.
- E) **School-families joint construction**: Difficulties are more frequent in communication and interaction between adults as teachers and parents, with indicators of social splitting, violence to “the other”, defensive positions “in the ring”, over or dis-involvement. We need more long-term work to produce and evaluate things. But there are indicators that parents are happier than in the past with their boys and girls participation and development at school. From PA views.
- F) **Social access to better opportunities**: Need of more long-term work for precise evaluation. Enhanced literacy and better conversation and living together is increasing the social access to better work opportunities, from PEA and SA perspective.

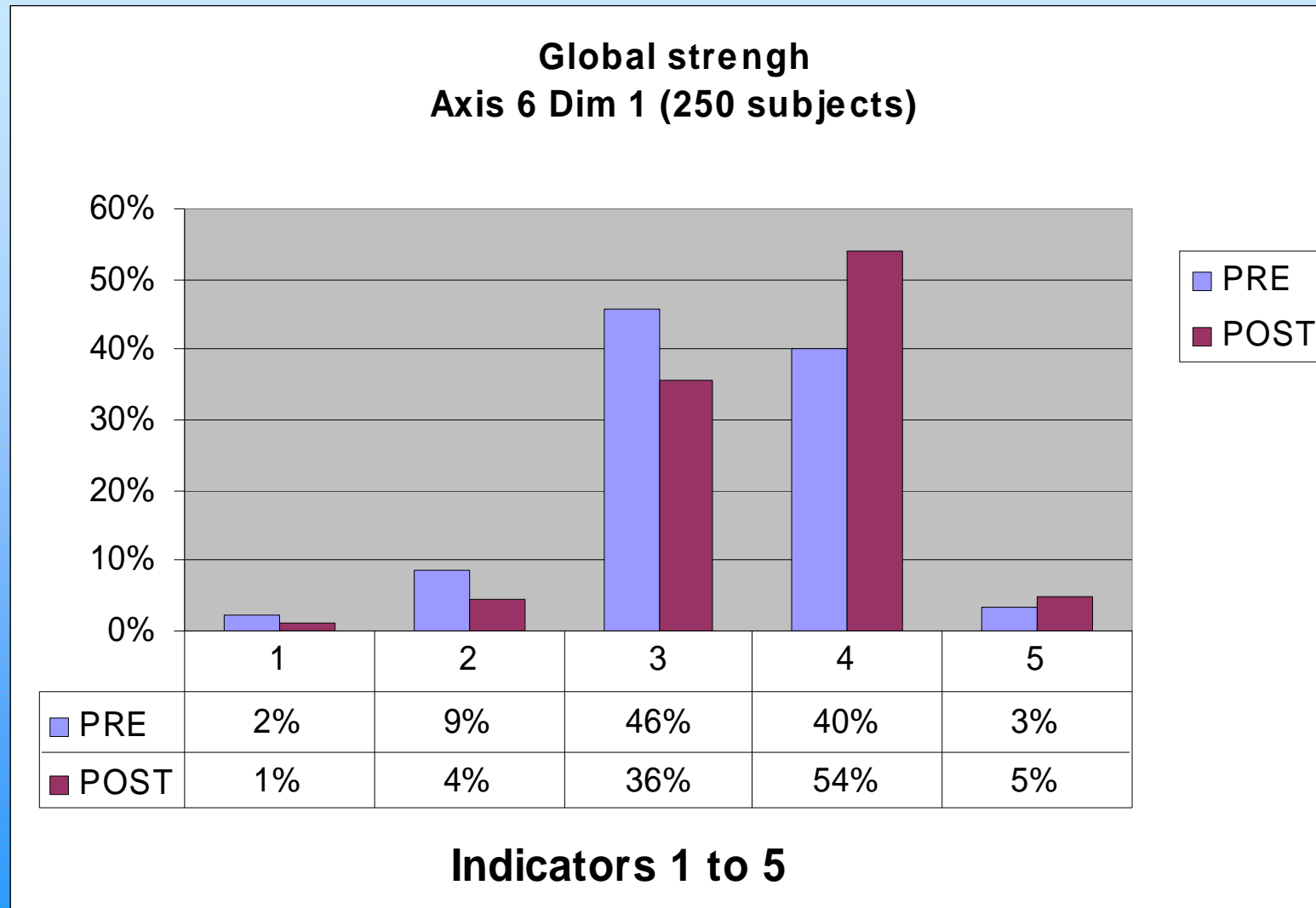
Follow-up Study(3)

- G) School integration of Special Educational Needs Pupils. Enrichment of social inclusion and participative appropriation of new tools and skills in *communities of practice* is reported. Improvement of *self-esteem, self-confidence, self-government, self-satisfaction, self-respect*, through experiences with teachers and peers – not only with special teachers or accompanying professionals – that are not centered in deficits but in strengths (from PEA and SA views).
- H) Building bridges between different levels and various educational settings – primary and secondary levels, secondary and higher education -, involves a continuous process of *re-mediation of secondary and strategic memory* of collective activity – teachers, pupils and principals, with outreach team writing, reading and remembering to each other– in a Project for *Helping One-Another for Going Beyond Oblivion and Encapsulation of Meaningful Experience at School* (from PEA and SA views)

Main Outcomes in Professional Learning

- Strengths in Psychologists after each annual experience at Schools:
 - A) Increased perspectivism, complexity and explanation,
 - B) Increased Relational Agency,
 - C) Ability for Reconstructing Social Memory,
 - D) Units of Analysis beyond individuals to social communities, a challenge for Psychologists.
 - E) Activity Planning and Handling of Learning Groups,
 - F) Involvement, Commitment, reaching Objectivity.
- Critical Knots in Psychologists after annual experience at Schools:
 - A) Ability to produce conditions for knowledge transference after leaving schools;
 - B) Using and building Specific tools, Taking decisions and Evaluating Results in Work Environments,
 - C) Increasing Worth of own knowledge, bridging with others´.
 - D) Increasing socio-emotional competencies, "in action", embodied.

One example: Matrix Axis 6: from realism to perspectivism



Findings en Situation-Problem Analysis: strengths

Axis 6: from realism to perspectivism



- An increase of perspectivism at the end of Apprenticeship is significant in the sample



- An increase of comparative analysis of different perspectives is a relevant achievement in Undergraduate Students.

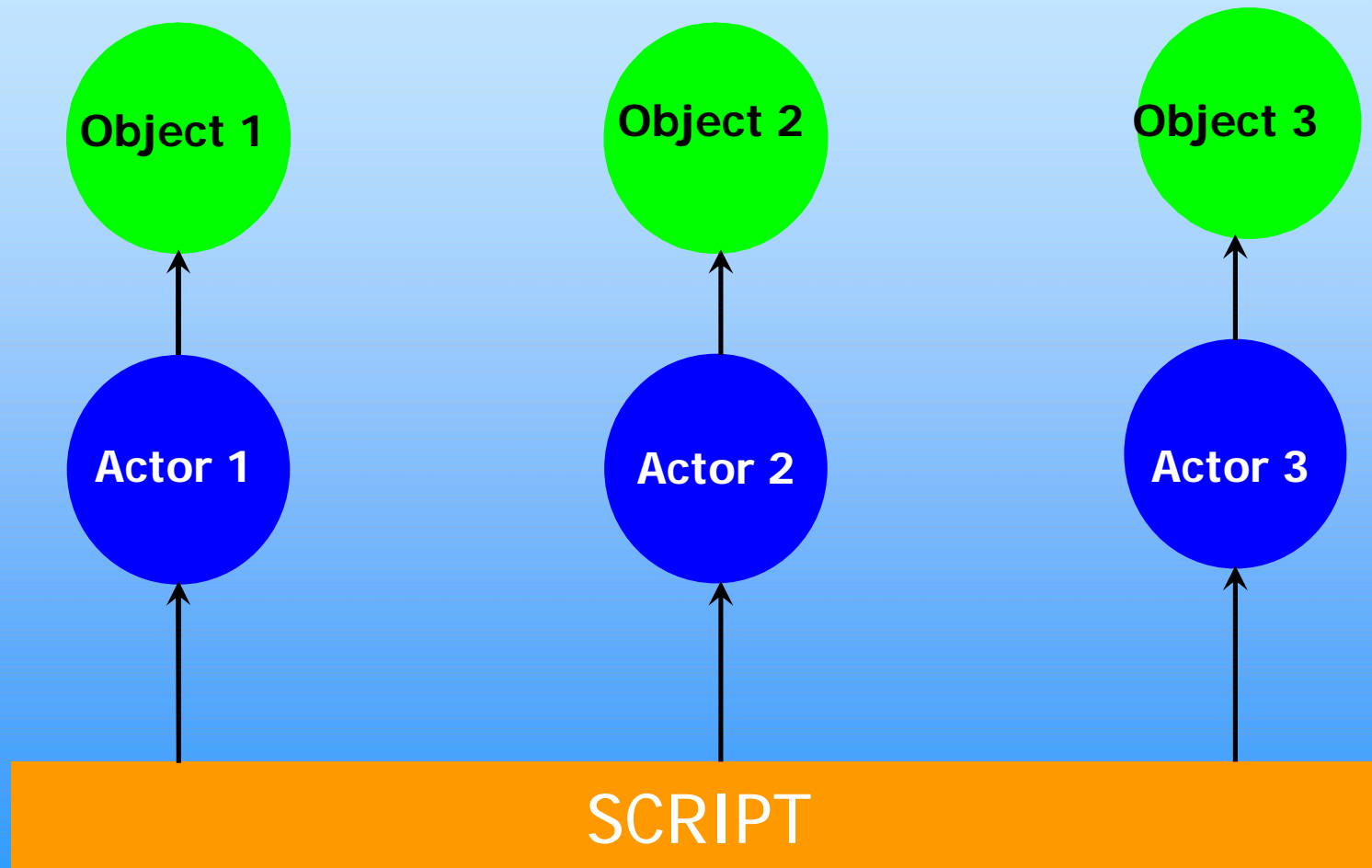


- A reduction of answers centered in unique perspective for understanding the problem - from common sense and from scientific perspective beyond common sense -.

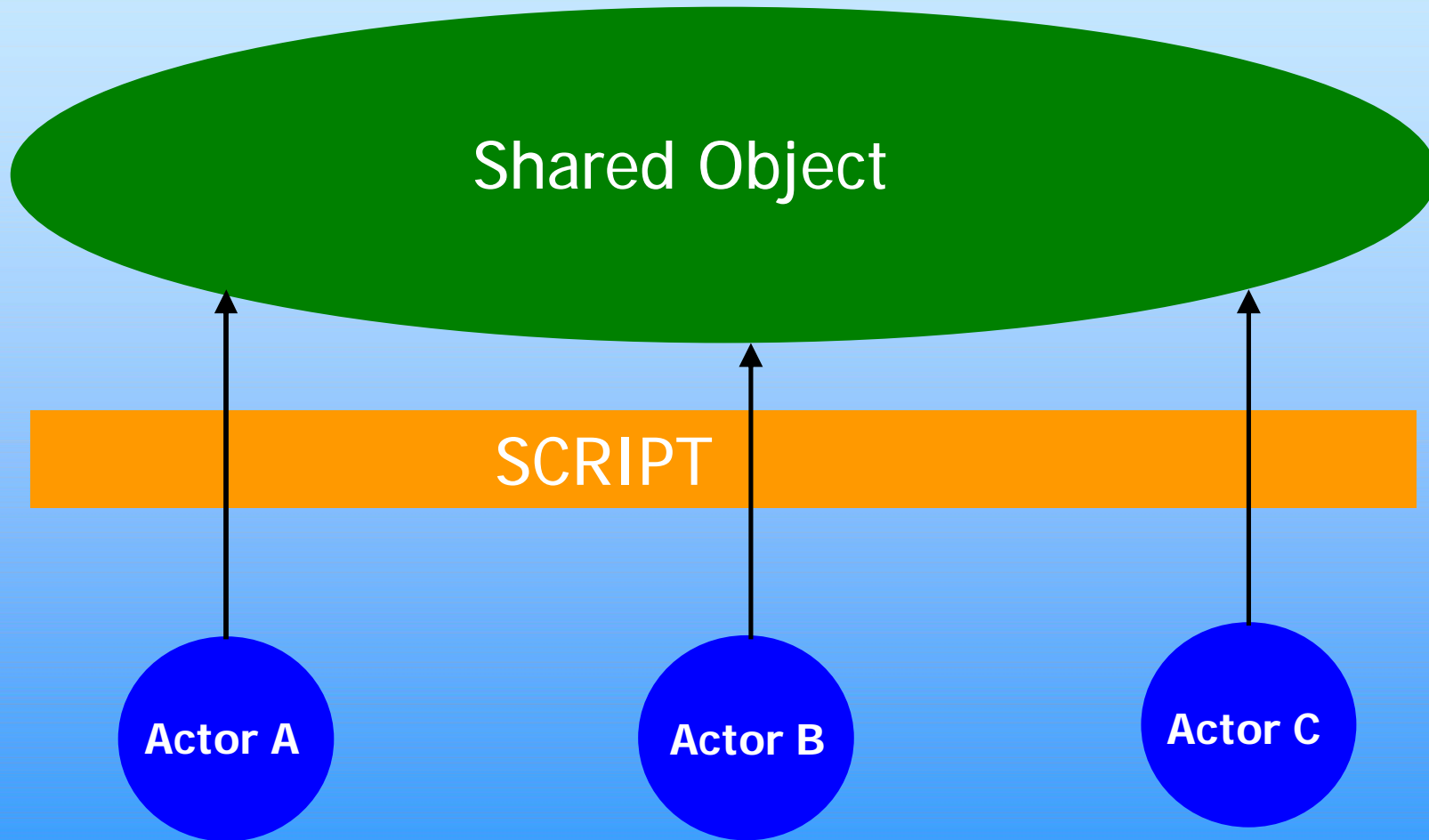
Professional Learning Outcomes

- Outcomes of the study underline **difficulties** but also **possibilities** for working in teams,
- and a *contextualist shift from* a structure of inter-agency of “**coordination**”, at the beginning of Extension Project Apprenticeship, and inter-agency structures of “**cooperation**” and “**reflective communication**”, at the end of Extension Project Apprenticeship.
- Outcomes point also the importance of analyzing **experiences of practitioners and experts** through *writing-and-reading conversations* – through a complex process of academic-professional literacy -,
- with reciprocal **exchange and appropriation** of meanings and emotions between one and others, with known and unknown people.

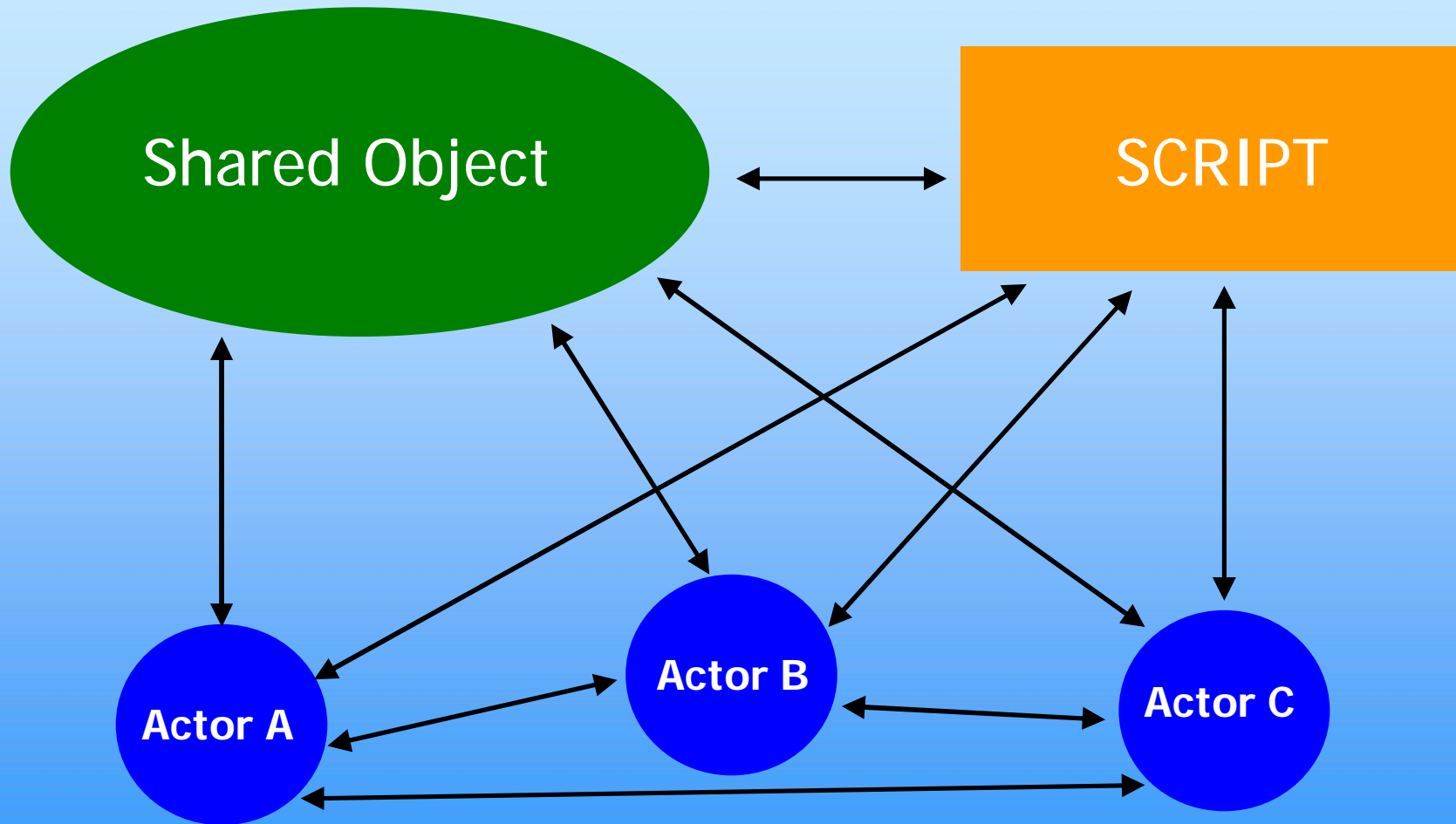
Coordination



Cooperation

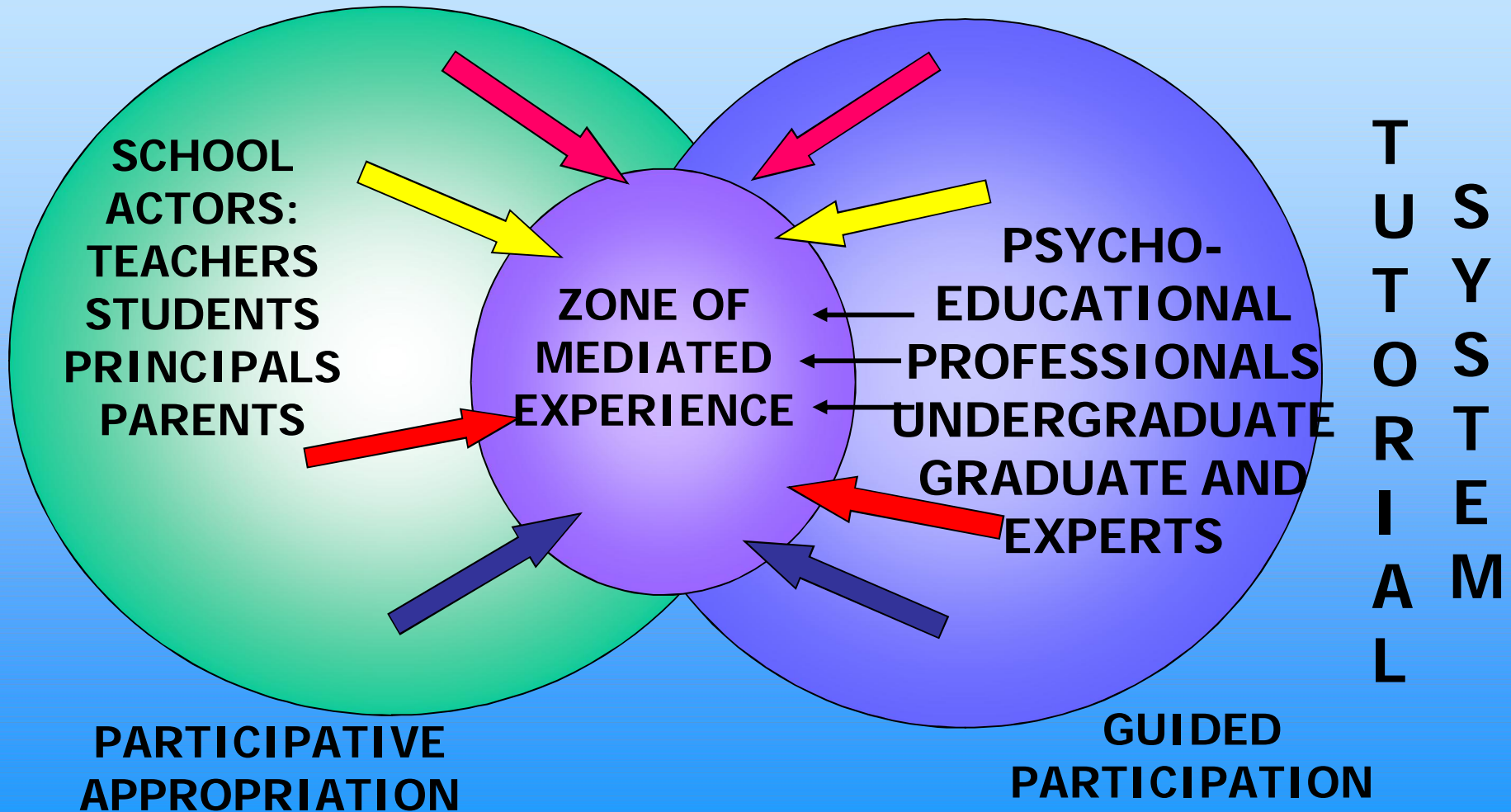


Reflective Communication



"CHALLENGES IN MODELLING PROFESSIONAL COGNITION, COMPETENCE AND IDENTITY"

APPRENTICESHIP



Conclusions

Working with **situation-problems** is a useful tool in **expansive learning** (Engestrom) for **going beyond institutions´encapsulation**, with the participation of the social actors as protagonists.

Analysis, working out and reflection on the practice through supervision and modeling, develop **networks and zones of social building of meanings: a significant challenge to Educational Psychology!**

The Questionnaire as a Researcher´ s tool for Data-Collection has become a Practitioner´ s and Agents´ **Instrument of Reflection on the Practice,**

a **Mediational Artifact** for building **innovative strategies and tools,** addressed to **inclusion-and-quality** in Education,

re-conceptualizing human beings as creators and transformers of their outer and inner world in order to master their own future (Yamazumi, 2006).

We learn to work working, although we don't know at the beginning how to do it. (Vygotsky, 1924)

Who learn have a chance to build how to do something with others. While they find out how their role can be, they follow one of many ways, *including one that there isn't yet there, one that they have to learn while they are constructing it.* (Engestrom, 1991)

Thank you!

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