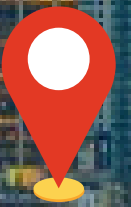


30th Annual Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning Working Group

2025 Working Group Meeting

Advancing Research Through Collaboration

**York University,
Toronto, Canada**

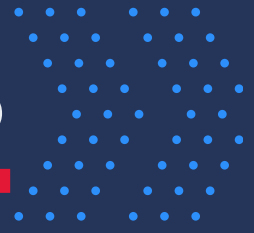


**Wednesday, October 15 -
Friday, October 17, 2025**



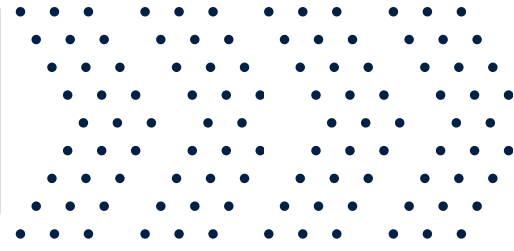
**In collaboration with OISE,
University of Toronto**

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Welcome Message

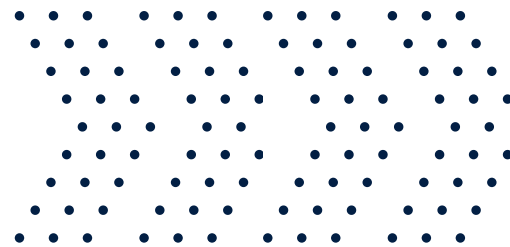


Welcome to the 30th Annual Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning Research Working Group Meeting at York University! The SCT-L2 meeting is the largest international working group focusing on Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory and second language learning and teaching research. In the past 30 years, we have seen early participants move from being graduate students to academics, researchers, and practitioners in universities and colleges around the world. In keeping with this international tradition, we once again welcome established and emerging scholars from institutions worldwide. As in every working group meeting, presenters will share their works-in-progress and receive feedback from their peers. We hope that the presentations and discussions will enrich your own work in, and understanding of, VSCT. We thank you for your contributions as you mediate our deeper understanding of Vygotskian research, theory and practice.

Ibtissem Knouzi (York University), Penny Kinnear (OISE-University of Toronto), and Merrill Swain (OISE-University of Toronto)

SCT L2 2025 Working Group Meeting Organizing Committee

Land Acknowledgement

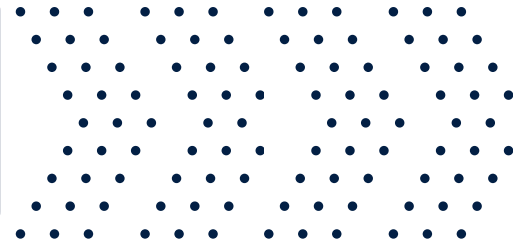


York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The diversity of these nations is echoed in the many backgrounds and cultures of the students who form the York community.

The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

We hope to honour the agreement's spirit of caretaking and collaboration as we hold this meeting and work to understand and build on our different and shared perspectives on this land.

Other Acknowledgements

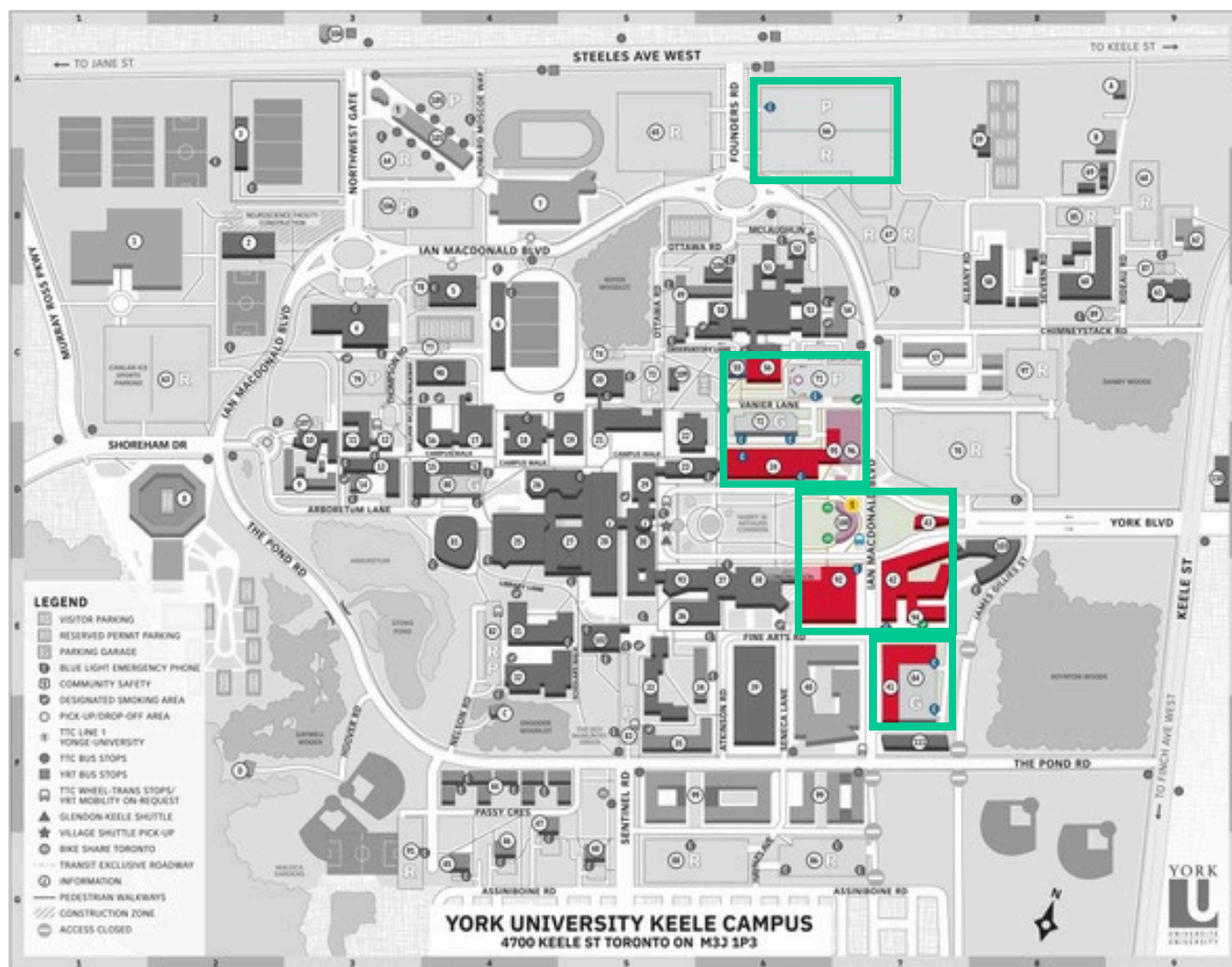
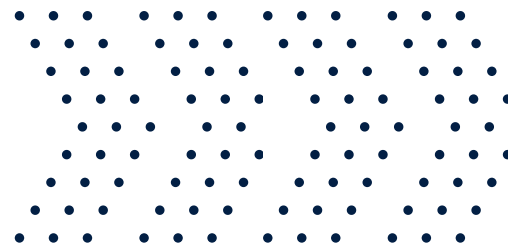


We would like to acknowledge with thanks:

- Funding from York University through two grants:
 - SSHRC Knowledge Mobilization grant
 - York University Research Support Grant
- The Research Support Team in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies at York University, especially Ravi de Costa (Associate Dean-Research) and Leeann Bennett (Grant Development Specialist)
- Gabriela Alboiu, Chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics
- The Conference Services & Catering team at the Executive Learning Center, especially Joyce Medeiros
- Graduate Student volunteers:
 - Majid Farham (York University)
 - Mahdi Ghadamgahi (York University)
 - Stephanie Kinzie (York University)
 - Naeimeh Mojerloo (York University)
 - Farya Mokhtari Mirabadi (York University)
 - José Luis Ortiz Soria (York University)
 - Justin Taylor (York University)
 - David Cooper (OISE-University of Toronto)
 - Tin Yuet (Tiffany) Tam (OISE-University of Toronto)
- Research Assistant: Ryka Golshani (York University)

Campus Map

* [please visit this link](#) for an interactive campus map



①

York University
TTC Station (Line 1)

D6

⑦1

Vanier Road
Visitor Parking Lot

C6

⑨2

Accolade East
(Meeting Location)

E7

⑦2

York Lanes Visitor
Parking Garage

D6

⑨4

Executive Learning
Center (Meeting Hotel)

E7

⑧4

Student Services Visitor
Parking Garage

E7

②4

York Lanes Mall

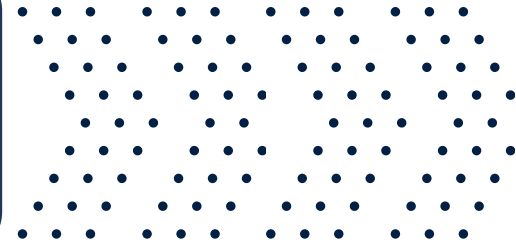
D6

⑥6

Founders Rd. East
Visitor Parking Lot

A6

Meeting Hotel: Schulich Executive Learning Center



Website:

Schulich School of Business York University | Home

Discover Schulich Executive Conference Center & Hotel in Toronto. Enjoy luxurious accommodations and top-notch amenities.

 Schulich School Of Business



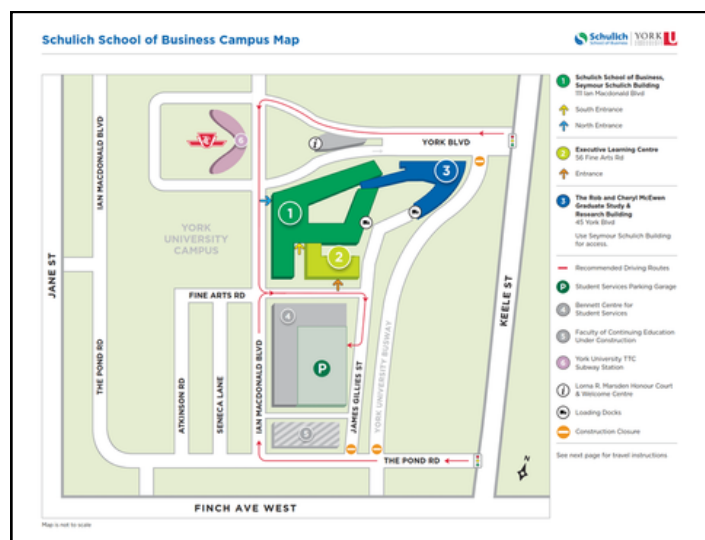
Address

56 Fine Arts Road
North York, Ontario M3J 3M6

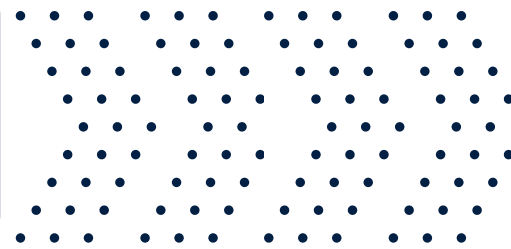
Parking

Enter the **Student Services Garage** from James Gillies St.

Proceed down to the lower level and **follow signs** for the Schulich School of Business and the **Executive Learning Centre (ELC)**



Getting to York University



York University Station, located only steps away from Accolade East, is on TTC Subway Line 1

YYZ to York University



GO Transit & Subway (recommended)

- Take the **Hwy 407 Express** GO Bus to **Hwy 407 Bus Terminal** (~20 minutes)
- From Hwy 407 Bus Terminal, take the subway **Line 1 Southbound** to Finch via Union.
- Exit left from **York University** station

Taxi or Airport Limousine

- From **Terminal 1**, head to **Doors C or D**;
from **Terminal 3**, head to **Door E**
- Look for fixed-price taxis or black limousines with **GTAA in the license plate**
- Estimated cost is 65 CAD to 85 CAD



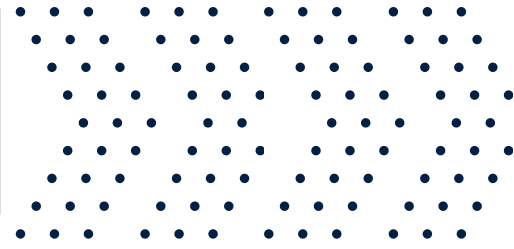
Bus & Subway

- Take the **952 Lawrence West** bus (in service 5 a.m. – 1 a.m. daily) to **Lawrence Ave. West Station** (~60 minutes).
- From Lawrence Ave. West Station, take the subway **Line 1 Northbound** to Vaughan.
- Exit left from **York University** station

Visitor Parking

* visitor lots and garages are open to all campus visitors

** [please visit this link](#) for more on-campus parking locations



Vanier Lot

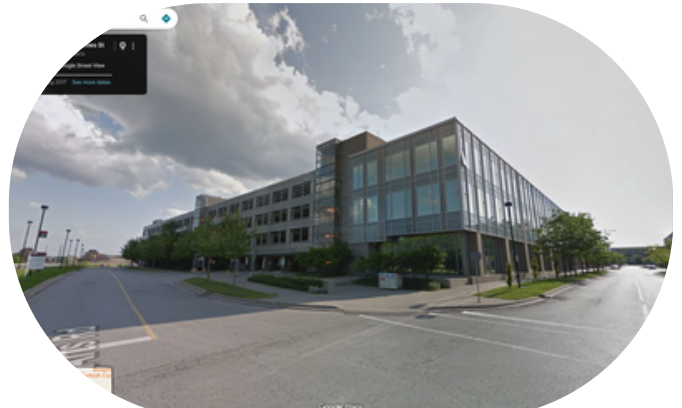


HONK Zone ID 7720

Cost: \$1.75/30 min. (\$15 max)

~ 10 min. walk to Accolade East

Student Services Garage



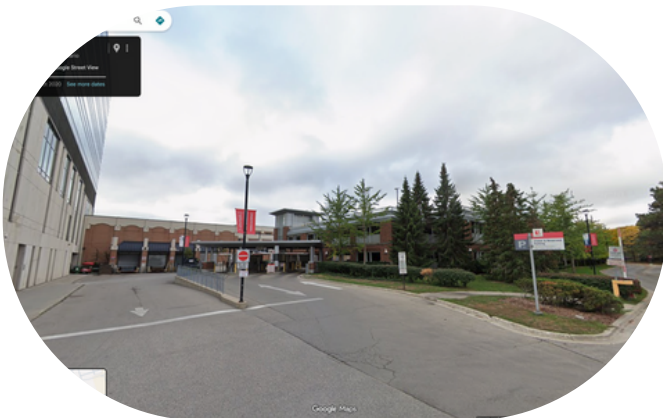
HONK Zone ID 7728

Cost: \$2.50/30 min. (\$20 max)

Evening: \$2.50/30 min. (\$8 max after 6 p.m.)

~ 5 min. walk to Accolade East

York Lanes Garage



HONK Zone ID 7727

Cost: \$2.50/30 min. (\$20 max)

Evening: \$2.50/30 min. (\$8 max after 6 p.m.)

~ 10 min. walk to Accolade East

Founders Rd. East Lot

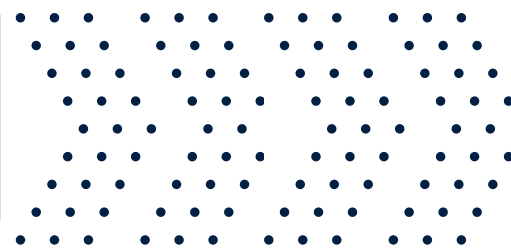


HONK Zone ID 7705

Cost: \$1.75/30 min. (\$10 max)

~ 15 min. walk to Accolade East

Restaurants on and near campus



York Lanes Mall



Eateries List

Step into our lively Mediterranean-inspired café! Savour our unique coffee blends, freshly baked delights, and a flavourful, fresh menu made just fo...

York Lanes

aroma
espresso bar



CHASKA
INDIAN STREET FOOD OBSESSION



HERO
CERTIFIED
BURGERS



FIREHOUSE
SUBS

 **PITA LAND**
MIDEAST URBAN KITCHEN

sushi
shop

QUAD Student Housing



Retailers Restaurants

The Quad at York offers a number of restaurants and services right on the main floor of the buildings. Forget having to leave campus, pick from a variety of international cuisines, get your teeth sparkly white, or do so...

QUAD



SALUS
FRESH FOODS

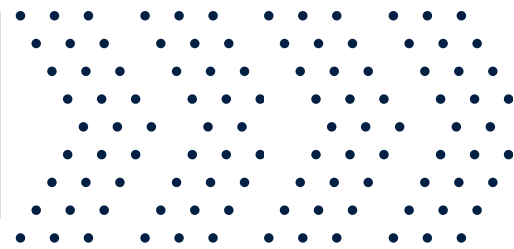


Gong cha 宫茶

OMNI 東方宮
NOODLE

SUBWAY

Conference Program & Collective Google Drive

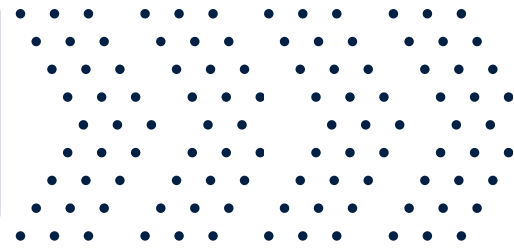


For this year's Working Group Meeting, we are storing conference materials in a shared Google Drive folder. This folder includes the schedule of events by date, a conference program with abstracts for all presentations, and presentation-specific folders.

Presenters are strongly encouraged to upload their materials (e.g., slides, video/sound files, transcripts, etc.) to their name-labeled folder in advance of their presentation. This will help ensure smooth presentations and ease of access to materials for the audience.

In each presentation-specific Google Drive folder, you will also find a '**Comments Form**' that the audience can use to provide additional feedback to presenters. QR codes linked directly to each presenter's folder will be available in the printed meeting program.

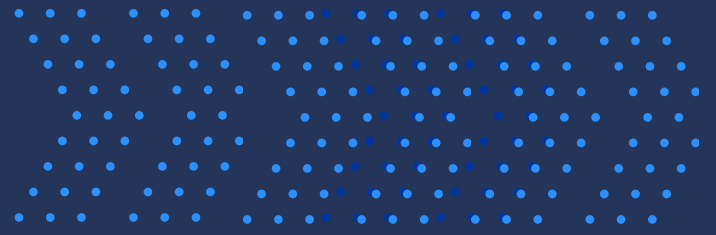
Zoom Protocol



Here are some guidelines to help us balance our in-person and online presenters and attendees.

- During sessions, the moderator will **alternate** between online and in-person questions. Attendees should wait to be acknowledged before asking questions or making comments.
- For clarity, attendees should state their names before asking a question or making a comment, and presenters should repeat questions before answering.
- Online attendees can type questions in the Zoom chat or raise their (virtual) hand and unmute themselves to speak.

October 15



Welcome 8:00 AM - 9:55 AM  Accolade East Room #011

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Morning Coffee and Breakfast

9:00 AM - 9:55 AM Welcome and Opening Remarks

Morning Session 10:00 AM - 11:55 AM

10:00 AM - 10:55 AM Karen E. Johnson

11:00 AM - 11:55 AM Stephanie Kinzie

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM **Mentoring Lunch**

Afternoon Session 1:05 PM - 3:00 PM

1:05 PM - 2:00 PM Meredith Doran & Jacob Rieker

2:05 PM - 3:00 PM David Cooper

3:00 PM - 3:20 PM **Afternoon Tea & Coffee Break**

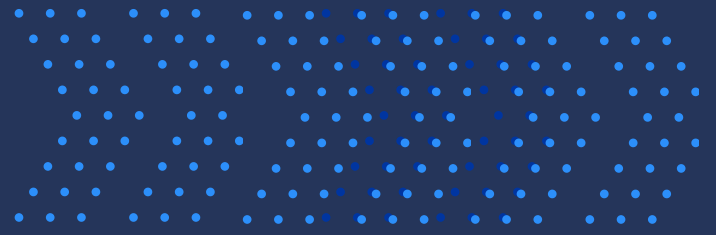
Closing Session 3:25 PM - 5:20 PM

3:25 PM - 4:20 PM Lauren E. Johnson, Eduardo Negueruela-Azarola, & Alessandro Rosborough

4:25 PM - 5:20 PM Celeste Kinginger

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM **Informal Social Gathering**

October 16



Welcome 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM  Accolade East Room #011

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Morning Coffee and Breakfast

Morning Session 9:00 AM - 11:55 AM

9:00 AM - 9:55 AM Rémi A. van Compernelle

10:00 AM - 10:55 AM Fernandez, Lantolf, Toth, Kissling, Mrstik, Schroeder, & Hoagland

11:00 AM - 11:55 AM Ehean Kim

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM **Lunch/Language and SCT Editorial Meeting**

Afternoon Session 1:05 PM - 3:00 PM

1:05 PM - 2:00 PM Nicholas Carr

2:05 PM - 3:00 PM Tina Randall & Kimberly Urbanski

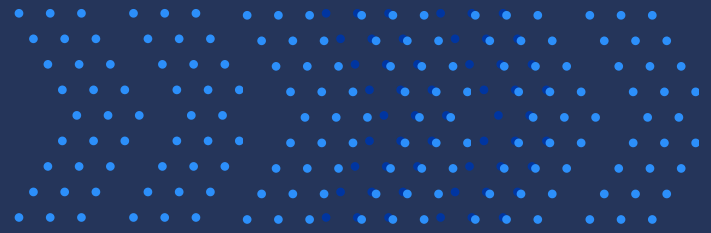
3:00 PM - 3:20 PM **Afternoon Tea & Coffee Break**

Closing Session 3:25 PM - 5:20 PM

3:25 PM - 4:20 PM José Luis Ortiz Soria

4:25 PM - 5:20 PM Jim Lantolf & Matthew Poehner

October 17



Welcome 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM  Accolade East Room #011

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Morning Coffee and Breakfast

Morning Session 9:00 AM - 11:55 AM

9:00 AM - 9:55 AM Ibtissem Knouzi & Shirin Mojerloo

10:00 AM - 10:55 AM Matthew E. Poehner, Lu Yu, Xiaozheng Dai, Xiaofei Lu, & Jingyuan Zhuang

11:00 AM - 11:55 AM Mahdi Ghadamgahi

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM **Lunch**

Afternoon Session 1:05 PM - 3:00 PM

1:05 PM - 2:00 PM Próspero N. García

2:05 PM - 3:00 PM Dmitri Leontjev, Vera Vesala, Matthew E. Poehner, & Ari Huhta

General Planning Meeting 3:05 PM - 4:00 PM

3:05 PM - 4:00 PM General Planning Meeting

A Tripartite Frame for the Development of Language Teacher Educator Expertise

Presenter(s): Karen E. Johnson

Oct 15

10:00 AM - 10:55 AM

This theoretical/conceptual session will be a collective 'thought experiment' on why and how second language teacher education (SLTE) has an ethical responsibility to transform teacher thinking (cognition/emotion) and activity (teaching) through intentional innovations that document teachers' developmental processes as a result of socially/institutionally situated interventions based on the principles and concepts of Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (VSCT).

Each of the following Vygotskian (2017/1963) premises will be proposed to the audience for discussion:

1. Pedagogical research must show how outward meaning and outward ability in the child [novice teacher] become inward (inter-psychological/intra-psychological)
2. Teachers [educators] should be able to watch the process of development as they occur in the head of each child [novice teacher] during the course of instruction
3. Teaching is not development, but teaching organized on the right basis will facilitate the child's mental development, bringing to life a whole range of developmental processes which outside teaching would not be possible

The presenter will then ask the audience to comment on the potential of the Vygotskian language teacher education tripartite frame: Innovation, Intentionality, Intervention (Johnson, Golombek, & Rieker, 2025) as a conceptual tool for the development of teacher educator and teacher expertise



How Mentoring Matters: Exploring TESOL Mentors' Pre-service Practicum Experience

Presenter(s): Stephanie Kinzie

Oct 15

11:00 AM - 11:55 AM

This is a data analysis session of my doctoral research project, "How Mentoring Matters: Exploring TESOL Mentors' Pre-service Practicum Experience." Practicum mentorship has a significant influence on teacher formation, but there is little existing research that prioritizes mentors and how and why they engage in pre-service practicum mentorship. My study explores the experience of the pre-service TESOL practicum mentor in adult education contexts and uses cultural-historical activity theory and genetic analysis to examine how and why mentors engage in the pre-service practicum; to identify how prior experiences, beliefs, and knowledge mediate the mentorship activity; and to understand how mentors balance the concurrent activities of mentorship and English second-language instruction.

Seven mentor teachers at a Canadian post-secondary institution completed autobiographical surveys about their personal and professional backgrounds, wrote diaries to chronicle their 2024 practicum mentorship experience, and participated in pre- and post-practicum interviews. Preliminary findings suggest that mentors viewed themselves as guides and collaborators and took on mentorship to provide the same opportunities they were afforded as student teachers. Participants' mentorship was often mediated by positive or negative experiences with a past "guiding" figure (parent, teacher, mentor) as well as by emotion. Nonetheless, their primary object in the practicum classroom remained their students' learning, which adds complexity when constructing the practicum activity triangle.

I am completing the analysis and preliminary write-up of my data. I hope to receive audience feedback on how to analyze emotion within a CHAT framework, how to conceptualize the dual roles of mentor and teacher that participants inhabited, and whether the data will be better served by using second or third generation activity theory as an analytic tool.



Collaborative Vygotskian Praxis: A Model for Making Professional Development Interventions Opportune, Relevant, & Meaningful

Presenter(s): Meredith Doran & Jacob Rieker

Oct 15

1:05 PM - 2:00 PM

When we implement professional development for language teachers or other educators, how do we know if it 'worked'? Given teachers' busy schedules, how can we use the time we have with them as productively as possible? In Vygotskian terms, how can we as teacher educators and faculty developers intentionally create conditions for meaningful development to unfold? In this presentation, we respond to these pressing questions by drawing on VSCT to offer a novel model for in-service/practicing teacher professional development: Collaborative Vygotskian Praxis (CVP). We explore how this model, which emphasizes joint engagement and impact on both teacher reasoning and practical activity, can be taken up productively to design, implement, and assess the impact of professional development initiatives (PDI), which represent a prevalent form of continuing teacher education, but remain relatively understudied in terms of their theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical orientations from a VSCT praxis-oriented perspective.

To illustrate this model, we draw on data from two PDI projects related to English-medium instruction (EMI): one focused on EMI faculty professional development (Doran, Rieker, & Yang, 2025; Rieker, Doran, & Chen, Accepted) and the other centered on supporting EMI faculty developers (Doran, Rieker, Puck, & Wang, in preparation). In both cases, we foreground the intentional design and implementation decisions guiding this PDI that enabled participants to experience these interventions as opportune, relevant, and meaningful (Rieker & Doran, 2025) for the development of instructional practices, as disciplinary faculty, and for shifts in orienting bases of action when providing responsive mediation as EMI faculty developers. Through analysis of these projects, and receiving responsive mediation from working group participants, we aim to further distill the core features of CVP and to explore its theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical value for PDIs across various contexts of teacher education, as well as for VSCT praxis more generally.



Studying the Role Emotion Plays in How Novice Teachers in a TESL Program Develop an Understanding of How to Teach through Microteaching

Presenter(s): David Cooper

Oct 15

2:05 PM - 3:00 PM

This session is concerned with the analysis of data collected for my doctoral research study, aimed at understanding the role emotion plays in how novice teachers in a TESL program develop an understanding of how to teach through microteaching. The central SCT concept I am utilizing is perezhivanie.

The microteaching activity, taking place in the participants' methodology course, is underpinned by a praxis-oriented approach to teacher education, leading to the development of teacher reasoning (Johnson et al., 2023). The activity is designed for participants to use pedagogical concepts (Johnson et al., 2023) to mediate their decision-making throughout the process of planning, implementation, and reflection. During the implementation stage, happening over three consecutive weeks, peers microteach to each other in small groups. Following each novice's microteach, the group engages in an oral feedback discussion. I am currently engaged in the analysis of the feedback discussions' transcripts. I am coding them by adapting Golombek and Doran's (2014) heuristic for identifying "forms of emotive content" (p. 106). My adaptation accounts for the shift in the "intentional structured mediational space" (Amory & Johnson, 2023, p. 6), from reflection journal to feedback discussion, and as such, includes both linguistic and non-linguistic forms of emotive expression. To guide my interpretation, I have drawn upon the distinction Leontiev (1981) made between an affect and emotion. In the session, I will share how I have operationalized these concepts and their connection to perezhivanie. I will ask session participants to code an excerpt from a transcript. I am seeking feedback on my method of analysis and its theoretical soundness within an SCT frame.

References

- Amory, M. D., & Johnson, K. E. (2023). Provoking novice teacher development: Cognition-and-emotion in learning-to-teach. *System*, 117, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103112>
- Golombek, P. R., & Doran, M. (2014). Unifying cognition, emotion, and activity in language teacher professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 39, 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.01.002>
- Johnson, K. E., Verity, D., & Childs, S. S. (2023). *Praxis-oriented pedagogy for novice L2 teachers: Developing teacher reasoning*. Routledge
- Leontiev, A. A. (1981). *Psychology and the Language Learning Process*. Pergamon.



Defining Teacher Healing and Wellbeing from a Vygotskian Sociocultural Perspective

Presenter(s): Lauren E. Johnson, Eduardo Negueruela-Azarola, & Alessandro Rosborough

Oct 15

3:25 PM - 4:20 PM

This abstract describes a data analysis/in progress work session. Rooted in core concepts of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, this session will include discussions of theory as well as practice. All data for the project has been collected, except for a final presentation to the school district. We will be asking participants to help confirm or contradict what we see in the data regarding our theoretical understanding of teacher healing and wellbeing as well as how to improve them in the future. Specifically, we will be discussing what Vygotskian sociocultural theory can contribute to the current definitions and understandings of language teacher healing and wellbeing. The main research question we will discuss is "How should we define teacher healing and wellbeing in dual language bilingual education programs from a Vygotskian sociocultural theory perspective?" We will present data collected over a period of two years documenting the challenges faced by four teachers in a dual-immersion elementary school in the Western United States. The idea of healing as an integral part of teacher wellbeing is not readily discussed in the literature. In this presentation, we will present the concept and our arguments for the critical role healing plays in teacher wellbeing. Our data informs our current definition of teacher wellbeing, which is based on identity, time and regulation. The SCT perspective on teacher wellbeing allows for a deeper understanding of the concept. For example, perezhivanie lets us bridge how a person's past experiences impact their present challenges and decisions to take up affordances. We plan to ask participants to address the following questions: "What can SCT bring to the field of teacher wellbeing? Does the presented data support our definitions of teacher healing and wellbeing? What other aspects of the data should we use looking forward?"



Interpreting Turning Points in Professional Life History Narratives through the Concept of Perezhivanie

Presenter(s): Celeste Kinginger

Oct 15

4:25 PM - 5:20 PM

What links might be drawn between narrative analysis and the SCT-informed concept of perezhivanie, or cognitive-emotional drama? Specifically, some narrative researchers note that the turning point has long been a key sociological construct. While epiphanies structure biographical texts, the corresponding events can be momentous or mundane yet nonetheless retain their symbolic value. Moreover, turning points provoke periods of reflection during which people feel a need to reconsider who they are.

In narrative research, turning points are normally analyzed as discursive, rather than psychological phenomena. Yet, given their above-described characteristics, it seems reasonable to suggest that narrative turning points are related to perezhivanie and to the role of cognitive-emotional drama in human development. As a concept, the term perezhivanie ("lived" or "emotional" experience) denotes the dialectic unity of emotion and cognition, the changes wrought by lived experiences of contradiction and drama, and longer-term, reflective and cathartic processes of resolving such conflict. As a unit of analysis, perezhivanie represents the dialectic unity of objective conditions in the social environment and the psychology of the individual: objective conditions are refracted through individual psychology to yield unique social situations of development. Cultural-historical theory posits that higher mental functions are transformed from social relations to intermental functions in the Zone of Proximal Development; however, not every relation provokes change. Only dramatic social situations, with an impact on the learner's emotions, have this effect. Data are 54 professional life history interviews from a larger study. These data have been through a first round of surface-level analysis for a relatively jargon-free, reader friendly book. I now seek help from the collective to render the analysis more theoretically robust and to test out the scholarly viability of this idea. This would be a data-analysis session based on excerpts of narratives illustrating turning points to do with language learning.



Replication, SCT, and Qualitative Science

Oct 16

9:00 AM - 9:55 AM

Presenter(s): Rémi A. van Compernelle

This session focuses on a theoretical/conceptual advancement: the role of replication research in SCT, especially from a qualitative science perspective (Packer, 2011; van Compernelle, 2019).

The renewed focus on replication research in second language studies over the past decade (Porte, 2012; Porte & McManus, 2019; Marsden et al., 2018; McManus, 2022) has emphasized testing the “reliability of [a] previous study’s findings, ... [or] to test the generalizability of earlier findings under different conditions” (Marsden et al., 2018, p. 322). However, most replication research has concentrated on quantitative, experimental studies. Little attention has been given to replication research in qualitative studies. Nonetheless, the notion that we need to determine whether and to what extent the results of previous studies can be replicated under the same, similar, or different conditions remains relevant to all of us, regardless of the kinds of data we collect or the methods of data analysis we use.

In this session, I argue that in SCT, we should focus on the transferability of explanatory principles, a concept similar to generalizability. The distinction is that while generalizability typically emphasizes the degree to which the empirical outcomes of a replication are the same as previous studies, as evidenced by measures such as statistical significance and effect size, qualitative SCT researchers should focus on the degree to which underlying explanatory principles are similar across studies. This allows us to demonstrate that our analyses may be reliable and transferable across conditions, even if the empirical outcomes are not identical from context to context or between individuals.

To make my case, I draw on three illustrative studies of concept-based language instruction. While the empirical work is finished, the conceptual work on replication is a work in progress, and I am seeking feedback on the conceptual/theoretical grounding of my approach to replication in SCT.



“Confusion Is Productive”: Obstacles and Opportunities in Teaching the Subjunctive as Dominion through Concept-Based Language Instruction

Presenter(s): Fernandez, Lantolf, Toth, Kissling, Mrstik, Schroeder, & Hoagland

Oct 16

10:00 AM - 10:55 AM

In this presentation, we examine the implementation of Concept-Based Language Instruction (CBLI) (Lantolf & Poehner, 2024) in an intermediate-level second language classroom, focusing on the subjunctive mood taught through the concept of Dominion (Vesterinen, 2012, 2013) which proposes that mood choice expresses how a speaker construes an utterance according to the conceptualizer's degree of epistemic or deontic control over the events in the situation described. Drawing on classroom recordings, student assessments, and homework submissions, we identify a set of recurring student "confusions" that arose during and after the instructional sequence. While some of these confusions were anticipated and reflect typical stages in internalizing new conceptual categories, others point to less expected tensions between formal instruction, conceptual abstraction, and learner prior knowledge.

Our session has two purposes. First, we aim to present how CBLI was enacted in the classroom—including the tools, tasks, and mediational means used to support learner understanding—and to showcase a range of student responses. These responses offer insight into how learners engage with, resist, or reinterpret conceptual categories like dominion, especially in relation to grammatical forms like the subjunctive. Second, we invite feedback from fellow educators and researchers on how to both improve our future CBLI design and more deeply interpret these moments of learner confusion. Are these signs of developmental progress, of misalignment between concept and form, or of instructional breakdown?

Through the reflection on both the opportunities and obstacles CBLI creates for L2 development, we seek to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the pedagogical and theoretical implications of teaching grammar through conceptual lenses. Our goal is not just to refine our own practice as we continue our project but also to collaboratively deepen our collective understanding of what it means to “teach for conceptual development” in L2 contexts.



Scientific Concepts for Teaching Korean Topic and Nominative Case Markers: Boundary and Pinpointing

Presenter(s): Ehean Kim

Oct 16

11:00 AM - 11:55 AM

This study focuses on developing conceptual understanding of Korean topic and nominative case markers (un/nun and i/ka) using boundary and pinpointing as scientific concepts. These concepts aim to transcend context-dependent rules of thumb found in traditional Korean textbooks by offering a systematic and decontextualizable approach to particle usage. The study aligns with the SCT framework by shifting learners' perspectives on L2 acquisition from adhering to correct/incorrect norms to making agentive choices based on appropriateness and intended meaning.

I have developed the core concepts and corresponding SCOBAs, and I am currently in the process of designing instructional materials that offer learners opportunities to internalize these concepts through imitation, play, and languaging. I am seeking feedback on whether the proposed concepts and SCOBAs require further refinement or modification. In this session, I will present the process through which these concepts were developed, as well as how they were materialized and implemented in my pilot studies.

I am seeking feedback on the validity and pedagogical applicability of boundary and pinpointing as materialized scientific concepts for explaining Korean particles. Specifically, I would appreciate insights on the following questions:

1. Do these concepts help learners understand the intended meanings beyond just recognizing forms? In other words, do they truly facilitate conceptual development, or are they merely disguised rules of thumb?
2. How can I refine my SCOBAs to better support learner development?
3. What types of instructional activities would best facilitate learners' engagement with and internalization of these concepts?



Integrating Concept-Based Language Instruction with AI Generated Computerized Dynamic Assessment: Is there a Role for AI?

Presenter(s): Nicholas Carr

Oct 16

1:05 PM - 2:00 PM

This work-in-progress reports on the potential role of AI in concept-based language instruction (C-BLI). Harnessing recent developments in AI, or more specifically large language models (LLMs), my colleagues and I recently developed an online tool which provides graduated feedback on learners' free writing—see dynamwrite.org for a demonstration. While initial testing showed the tool provided valuable diagnostic information, it was less effective at providing mediation which provoked conceptual development, and accordingly, was limited in its ability to initiate development which helped learners use language with more control in subsequent writing tasks.

This presentation reports on my subsequent attempts to design a standalone computer-based system which implements C-BLI solely through technology enhanced means, including the use of LLMs to provide feedback during specific phases of C-BLI. Specifically, I am investigating if LLMs can provide feedback which plays a role in mediating learners' towards novel ways of understanding and functioning in the target language when embedded within C-BLI interventions.

Data has been collected via a small-scale case study in a laboratory setting with Japanese university L2 English learners. Participants undertook C-BLI interventions delivered solely through our online tool, with instruction focussing on grounding things using articles. Data sources include: participant understandings of the concepts pre- and post-intervention, verbalizations during C-BLI activities, and participants' interactions with and responses to LLM generated feedback during C-BLI interventions.

I seek assistance from the working group in two ways. First, in the form of data analysis to help evaluate if the tool provided mediation, and not just scaffolding; and assistance in evaluating any potential learner development from the dataset. Second, I seek advice on future iterations of this tool, as I continue to investigate the potential role of AI in VSCT pedagogical approaches, particularly given the potential for dynamic assessment to be scaled-up in novel ways and embedded as part of a broader pedagogical endeavour.



Analysis of Microgenetic Development of English Question Formation via CDA/AI

Presenter(s): Tina Randall & Kimberly Urbanski

Oct 16

2:05 PM - 3:00 PM

Based on an SCT perspective, computer programs that dynamically assess a variety of grammatical features have been developed to date (e.g., Kargar Behbahani & Karimpour, 2024; Modarresi & Alavi, 2014; Randall & Urbanski, 2023), with at least one specifically addressing question formation in English (Poehner & Leontjev, 2020). These programs used an interventionist approach and are therefore limited in terms of the mediation they provided. In addition, many lacked opportunities for transcendence (Poehner, 2007). We are seeking feedback on our plan to develop a CDA program that incorporates AI prompts in order to approach interactionist mediation, providing increasingly complex test items that allow learners to transfer the skill of question formation into other areas, such as analyzing problems by asking questions. To determine learners' developmental trajectories, the usefulness of the program as a diagnostic tool (i.e., learners' instructional needs) and how close learners are to self-regulation (developmental level), we evaluate their microgenetic development as they complete the CDA. To do this, instruction in the form of a teaching module on English question formation developed by the researchers will first be taught to two groups of English language learners (ELLs): a control and a CDA group. Learners in the control group take the test without mediation and students in the CDA group take the dynamic test. We compare control and CDA groups in terms of number of correct answers in the course of the assessment and, for the CDA group, we also analyze reliance on prompts as the assessment progresses within the CDA session.

We are looking for feedback from the SCT L2 Working Group in the following areas: 1) types of question items and prompts provided by the program; 2) incorporation of AI (pros/cons, advice); 2) methodology to trace microgenetic development.

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Complex Language Learning Ecosystems: Examining the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Post-Secondary English Language Education

Presenter(s): José Luis Ortiz Soria

Oct 16

3:25 PM - 4:20 PM

The great variety of resources available online has made technology-mediated language learning experiences outside of the classroom increasingly popular (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Reinhardt, 2022). Furthermore, learners and educators are realizing the potential and challenges of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for English teaching and learning with tools such as ChatGPT (Mills et al., 2023; Ngo, 2023; Solak, 2024). Therefore, in addition to the need for more studies on learners' learning beyond the classroom (LBC) experiences to understand the individual learner and their (learning) environment outside of the classroom (Lai et al., 2017; Reinders & Benson, 2017), it is also crucial to shed light on the metacognitive strategies and pedagogies needed to learn and teach with AI (Bearman, 2022; Carvalho et al., 2022). This presentation reports on an in-progress research project that examines post-secondary English as a second language (ESL) learners' LBC experiences in digital learning ecosystems, specifically in ESL learners' use of AI, and ESL learners' and educators' beliefs about AI. The potential findings of this research aim to inform the integration of learners' in-the-classroom and LBC experiences with digital and AI technologies. Participants in the study are ESL postsecondary students and teachers in a Canadian postsecondary institution. The study is designed under a framework in which Complex Systems Theory (de Bot, 2017; Hampel, 2019; Larsen-Freeman, 1997) is used as a metatheory, and Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2013; Swain et al., 2015) and Connectivism (Downes, 2022; Siemens, 2005) complement the theoretical triad. Particularly, SCT is used to analyze how learners interact with human and non-human agents, resources, and tools. The presentation focuses on how this theoretical framework is being used to analyze the preliminary findings emerging from the research. The researcher seeks feedback on SCT's role in interpreting the research's data as part of the research's theoretical framework.



A Crisis in SLA and What to do About It: Learning from Vygotsky

Presenter(s): Jim Lantolf & Matthew Poehner

Oct 16

4:25 PM - 5:20 PM

The project to be presented has a two-fold purpose: first, to outline the parameters of the crisis in SLA; and second, to suggest a possible way of resolving the crisis leading to the formation of a unified theory of SLA. According to Sturm and Mülberger (2012), psychology has experienced a constant state of crisis since its inception in the late 19th century. Among the numerous publications addressing the crisis, we believe that Vygotsky's Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology to be the most insightful. He traced the origin of the crisis to the proliferation of psychological theories and schools at the time as well as to the mistake of borrowing research methods from other sciences and not considering the cognitive orientation with which researchers approach the task of interpreting the scientific evidence. We believe the same set of problems facing SLA. By our count there are currently some 18 different theories of SLA, there is a clear assumption that research method, especially quantitative statistical and mathematical in nature, should be the dominant approach to the study of SLA, and there appears to be little concern with the crucial distinction between method (research technique) and methodology (cognitive orientation of researchers). Moreover, the notion of causality is limited to efficient cause-effect relationships between independent and dependent variables which is based on appearance and cannot reveal underlying psychological processes. In "the crisis" Vygotsky laid the foundation for a general theory that would unify the various subfields of psychology. We argue that this is also what is needed in SLA, as was in fact suggested 35 years ago by Spolsky (1990), but which the field has done little to bring about.



Chatting with ChatGPT: Microgenetic Analysis of a Multilingual Writer's Interactions with AI

Presenter(s): Ibtissem Knouzi & Shirin Mojerloo

Oct 17

9:00 AM - 9:55 AM

Drawing on a critical review of recent literature on multilingual students' use of AI during writing tasks and the associated ethical and pedagogical concerns, the presentation engages the audience in an SCT-informed analysis of the potential mediational role of ChatGPT, its affordances and limitations.

We present a microgenetic analysis of a multilingual student's dialogic interaction with ChatGPT while writing a summary and a critical response. The analysis traces changes in the student's behavioral, cognitive and affective engagement (Koltovskaia, Rahmati & Saeli, 2024) with the AI tool focusing especially on evidence of the student's agency in accepting, resisting, or adapting the ChatGPT output, and the role of factors such as the student's attitudes to AI, the level of writing challenges and task type on the pace and complexity of the student-bot interactions.

We seek feedback on the design and analysis instruments. We also invite comments and reflections on indicators of dialogism, graduation and contingency (cf. Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) and the relevance of constructs such as explicit/implicit mediation and intentionality when examining students' interaction with AI tools.



From Interaction to Mediation: Exploring AI-DA of L2 Academic Writing

Oct 17

10:00 AM - 10:55 AM

Presenter(s): Matthew E. Poehner, Lu Yu ,
Xiaozheng Dai, Xiaofei Lu, & Jingyuan Zhuang

The defining feature of Dynamic Assessment (DA) is the integration of mediation (e.g., prompts, leading questions, models, feedback) in the assessment procedure to extend the focus of diagnosis beyond learner independent functioning to include their Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD (Poehner & Wang, 2021). Since its introduction to the L2 field roughly twenty years ago, a frequent critique of DA is that while it yields valuable diagnostic insights into learner development, one-to-one procedures are time-intensive and may not be feasible in some classroom or formal testing contexts. Computerized procedures (C-DA), in which a program provides mediating prompts and feedback to learners, have been successfully implemented in various contexts (e.g., Poehner & Lantolf, 2013; Leontjev, 2016; Qin & van Compernelle, 2021; Randall & Urbanski, 2023), and while valuable, it is also clear that these procedures do not offer the flexible, responsive quality of mediation that renders DA so effective in diagnosing learner development (Minick, 1987). We report pilot data from an ongoing project that explores AI-enhanced DA of L2 academic writing.

This work-in-progress session demonstrates our AI-DA system in its current iteration, which involves training ChatGPT-4o on writing rubrics in order to guide learners through a process of reflecting on targeted aspects of their writing as well as providing suggestions for revision. While initial results are encouraging, much work is needed to improve the quality of what the system offers learners, specifically whether it constitutes mediation in SCT terms. Taking intentionality as a defining characteristic of mediation (Feuerstein et al., 2015; Kozulin, 2024), we invite attendees to consider with us instances of learner-AI interactions that we posit took a developmental focus as well as those that did not. We then open a discussion concerning implications of this research for future efforts to use AI as mediation.



Generative Artificial Intelligence as a Mediating Artifact in Academic Writing: A Case Study

Presenter(s): Mahdi Ghadamgahi

Oct 17

11:00 AM - 11:55 AM

Academic writing is not just a practical skill but a vital part of a graduate student's intellectual toolkit, which allows them to engage meaningfully with disciplinary discourse and scholarly communication (Nguyen et al., 2024). Recently, a transformative shift has occurred with the growing integration of GenAI into academic writing, particularly among ESL/EAL graduates—a group increasingly utilizing GenAI (Yusuf et al., 2024)—to mediate their academic writing tasks (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024; Liu et al., 2021).

Within this evolving landscape, GenAI offers mediational affordances such as scaffolding for coherence, lexical precision, genre negotiation, idea generation, and literature synthesis (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Yan, 2023), while raising contradictions like diminished authorship, overreliance, reduced critical engagement, and ethical concerns (Ngo & Hastie, 2025; Thorne, 2024). Amid these emerging complexities, most GenAI-writing studies (e.g., Hysaj et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2025) remain limited by relying on cross-sectional, self-reported data and focusing on surface-level outcomes, thereby neglecting the nuanced processes of appropriation and contextual mediation.

Therefore, to address current gaps, I plan to conduct a qualitative, exploratory case study, grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory (SCT), to examine (1) how ESL/EAL graduates appropriate GenAI as a cultural artifact/tool to mediate their academic writing in real time, with a focus on the development of this appropriation using microgenetic analysis; (2) how they negotiate the affordances and contradictions of GenAI-mediated academic writing—both of which I aspire to explore through screen recordings and retrospective think-aloud protocols; and (3) how sociocultural conditions/factors shape their engagement with and perceptions of GenAI-mediated academic writing, which I will investigate through semi-structured interviews informed by Activity Theory. As this proposal is still under development, I would appreciate feedback on the study's design, methodological choices, and the potential application of additional SCT concepts to enhance its clarity, relevance, and analytical depth.



Rethinking the Online-Asynchronous Elementary Second Language Curriculum in Higher Education from a Sociocultural Lens

Presenter(s): Próspero N. García

Oct 17

1:05 PM - 2:00 PM

While current research and pedagogical praxis grounded in Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (SCT) has advanced the field by exploring the implementation of SCT inspired pedagogical practices such as Concept-Based Language Instruction (C-BLI) and Dynamic Assessment, among others, there is very little L2 research or pedagogical materials showcasing a whole curricular overhaul (Poehner & Lantolf, 2024). This is precisely the goal of this work-in-progress: Seeking meaningful mediation from the conference attendants in the redesign of an online-asynchronous elementary L2 Spanish sequence at the college level from a Sociocultural Lens.

The curriculum was led by a textbook and designed embracing traditional structural models, which approached teaching and learning of Spanish in a piecemeal and taxonomic fashion, asking students to rely on prescriptive rules and rote memorization to support their language use. To address this issue and to support online instruction, we attempted to redesign parts of our elementary online language curriculum implementing a concept-based approach to address concepts like aspect to develop learners' awareness and control over Spanish preterite and imperfect, and *ser* and *estar*, or the concepts of emotion, agentivity, and causativity for the development of Spanish verbs of emotion. These sequences were intended to serve as a foundational resource for developing a whole curriculum that adopted research practices, instructional strategies, and assessment tools grounded in Vygotskian principles.

This session showcases this work-in-progress and will be divided into three parts: 1) a 15-minute presentation 2) 10-15 minute small-group discussion about the ideas presented and possible mediation to enhance the project; and 3) 15-20 minutes devoted to open discussion and co-construction of knowledge. It is expected that feedback from the attendants will help in modelling the proposals discussed during this presentation. Specifically, we are interested in questions and suggestions regarding instructional design and pedagogical practice in an online environment. This feedback will be critical as we refine our curriculum and develop subsequent resources for the field.



"I've been wondering about what my role is": Teacher Interpretation and Use of Assessment Information to Guide Instructional Practices

Presenter(s): Dmitri Leontjev, Vera Vesala,
Matthew E. Poehner, & Ari Huhta

Oct 17

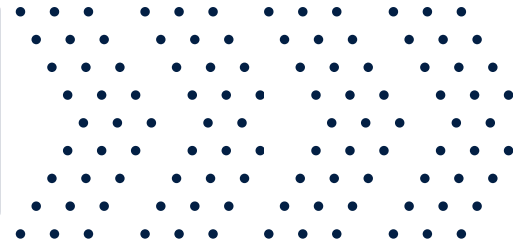
2:05 PM - 3:00 PM

Haywood and Lidz (2006) explained that a major impediment to Dynamic Assessment (DA) realizing its potential in general education derives from a disconnect between assessors conducting DA and classroom teachers, uncertain how to integrate diagnostic insights into instruction. While L2 researchers are likely to approach this breakdown as a matter of teacher assessment literacy, an SCT perspective frames it as an opportunity for praxis focused on the use of theoretical principles to both diagnose and promote learner L2 development. This presentation explores processes of mediating teacher understanding of DA and the use of information it provides to orient instruction in the context of an ongoing project with upper-secondary school L2 English teachers in Finland as they work to develop learners' reading comprehension in preparation for the Finnish Matriculation Exam. The project includes an AI-enhanced system, Revita (<https://revita.cs.helsinki.fi/>), as a platform for delivering computerized DA to provide detailed diagnoses of learner struggles and emerging abilities relative to L2 reading constructs (e.g., inferring vocabulary from the context; reading for specific detail). Following a brief overview of the project, we will lead the audience through interactional excerpts taken from praxis-oriented collaborative sessions involving researchers and teachers. Examples highlight researcher attempts at responsive mediation during joint analysis with teachers of learner performance during DA (including use of the AI chatbot) and planning for future classroom activity. We invite the audience to share their ideas as to:

1. what they see in the data concerning teacher understanding of learner DA performance and what it means regarding learner L2 reading development;
2. comments on research efforts to mediate teacher understanding of DA and connection of DA outcomes to subsequent instruction; and
3. features of learner engagement during DA, including emotional responses, that might be brought to teacher attention and used to inform instruction.



Keep the Conversation Going!



We invite you to join two SCT Working Groups that provide a (virtual) space to connect with colleagues, present research at different stages of completion and receive constructive feedback in a supportive and affirming environment. The groups have similar objectives but operate separately.

SCT Working Group (based in the US, directed by Michael Amory):

- michael.amory@okstate.edu

SCOLAR Group (based in Canada, directed by Merrill Swain and David Cooper):

- merrill.swain@utoronto.ca
- dj.cooper@mail.utoronto.ca

SAVE THE DATE

**August
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