

Introduction to the special issue “Four Interviews with Professor Yrjö Engeström and One of His Lectures”

KATSUHIRO YAMAZUMI

Kansai University

kyamazum@kansai-u.ac.jp

The special issue “Four Interviews with Professor Yrjö Engeström and One of His Lectures” contains the following four interviews with Professor Yrjö Engeström and one of his lectures:

1. 2007 Interview on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

The interview took place on November 2, 2007, at Professor Yrjö Engeström’s home in Sipoo, Finland, with Katsuhiko Yamazumi (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Kansai University, Japan) and Katsutoshi Yamazumi (Director, Earthquake Learning Lab, Futaba Community Learning Center, Japan) as the interviewers.

2. 2023 Interview on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

The interview took place on March 15, 2023, at Professor Engeström’s home, with Katsuhiko Yamazumi as the interviewer.

3. 2023 Interview on the Change Laboratory

The interview took place on March 16, 2023, at Professor Engeström’s home, with Katsuhiko Yamazumi as the interviewer.

4. 2023 Interview on De-encapsulation of School

The interview took place on March 16, 2023, at Professor Engeström’s home, with Katsuhiko Yamazumi as the interviewer.

5. 2013 Lecture “From Teams to Knots: A Challenge for Future-Making”

The lecture was given online to participants in Japan on June 17, 2013, from

the Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning CRADLE, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Professor Engeström currently holds the following positions:

Director, Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning CRADLE

Professor Emeritus of Education, University of Helsinki

Professor Emeritus of Communication, University of California, San Diego

Visiting Professor, Rhodes University, South Africa

Visiting Professor, University West, Sweden

Professor Engeström is a world-renowned pioneer and leading scholar in the study of cultural-historical activity theory. He is internationally prominent for his theory of expansive learning, which is a new learning theory based on activity theory. He is continuously promoting research on the transformations of activity systems, ranging from workplaces and organizations to schools and social movements, while applying and developing the conceptual framework of activity theory and the theory of expansive learning. This is closely linked to the application and development of formative intervention methodology, particularly in the Change Laboratory. Professor Engeström's current primary research interest lies in the dialectics of global collaboration to develop the fourth-generation activity theory to respond to the challenges of current planetary crises.

Professor Engeström has published the following books in recent years. Three of these books, *From Teams to Knots*, *Learning by Expanding* (2nd ed.), and *Studies in Expansive Learning*, have been translated and published in Japanese.

Engeström, Y. (2008). *From teams to knots: Activity-theoretical studies of collaboration and learning at work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Engeström, Y. (2015). *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Engeström, Y. (2016). *Studies in expansive learning: Learning what is not yet there*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Engeström, Y. (2018). *Expertise in transition: Expansive learning in medical work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Engeström, Y. (2024). *Concept formation in the wild*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

I would like to express my deepest and sincere gratitude to Professor Engeström for his generosity in agreeing to give the four interviews and one lecture here and for his enthusiastic and insightful responses over a long period of time. From these four interviews and one lecture, I have repeatedly been fascinated, inspired, and deeply impressed by the powerful view of humanity

and the world that underpins the study of cultural-historical activity theory. I hope that this special issue will serve as an invitation for further fascinating research on activity theory.

The 2023 interviews were conducted when I was invited to stay at the guesthouse of Professor Engeström’s home in Sipoo from March 15–17, 2023. This stay was done with his consideration because it allowed us to use the time efficiently and concentrate on the interviews. Thanks to this, I was able to conduct very fulfilling interviews. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Engeström for his consideration and support for this work.

Professors Engeström and Annalisa Sannino provided me with breakfast, lunch, and dinner each day during my stay, and I had the pleasure of sharing meals with them. Their warm hospitality allowed me to spend time and engage in warm and pleasant conversations with them. Their home and guesthouse are wrapped in nature, in a silver world full of light. The sight of the home and guesthouse together made my stay a memorable experience.



Morning view from the window of Professor Engeström’s guesthouse

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