

A DESCRIPTION OF CRIRES FOR THE CRADLE GLOBAL PARTNER RESEARCH GROUPS

Dear colleagues, please find a description of our research group.

Name of the research group and its coordinator

The *Centre de recherche et d'intervention sur la réussite scolaire* (CRIRES / Center for research and intervention for school success (CRI_SAS) first referred to the CHAT framework as a meta-analytical tool for identifying the conflicting research results found by researchers affiliated with the Center. Moreover, a good proportion of CRIRES 56 researchers are engaged in partnership and collaborative research projects. Their works revolves around the following two axes: 1) *Pratiques proximales* / Practices occurring at proximity of the child or student; 2) *Modes d'organisation de la formation* / Schooling organizational modes and practices. CRIRES' rallying call is "No intervention without research and no research without intervention". To this end, CHAT is key.

History and context

CRIRES was created in 1992 during a Meeting on school success that reunited many educational partners in Quebec City, and after intensive planning in the months that preceded. An agreement was signed between Laval University and the main teacher union in Quebec (CEQ), and has been renewed every four years. Both organizations provide financial support every year. Since its inception, CRIRES has been expanding, and now counts researchers from seven other Quebec universities: University of Sherbrooke, University of Montreal, University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières, Chicoutimi, Rimouski and Outaouais campus, and McGill University. Moreover, CRIRES has been supported by Canadian and Quebec grant agencies, and the Ministry of Education. A fundraising campaign gave to CRIRES an endowment of nearly a million dollars. CRIRES dedication to context, and partnership research is exceptional in Quebec.

Fields of practice and/or partners

Learning and teaching in formal settings (math and science education, French, and social studies)

Special education

Vocational education

Adult education

School administration, evaluation and measurement

Networked learning environments.

Who we are/how to contact us

Thérèse Laferrrière is CRIRES' director and Sylvie Barma is associate director.

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Photos

	<p>Members celebrated CRIRES' 25th anniversary on January 26th, 2018. The Dean, Fernand Gervais, is a member of CRIRES</p>		
	<p>2012 Graduate seminar on activity theory by colleague Barma (center).</p> <p>A colloquium on partnership research (2017). Colleague Breuleux and partners are presenting.</p>		
		<p>Our international Francophone review <i>Innovater dans la tradition de Vygotsky</i> also accepts Anglophone articles</p> <p>Our website publishes open access books, and recently created a space for ISCAR members and friends to publish called ISCAR Nid - Nest</p>  <p>The proceedings of the first colloquium on Vygotsky held in Paris were reedited (2018) by Britt-Mari Barth.</p>	
	<p>We have partnerships with teachers and schools that run special programs for kids not much interested in their schooling</p>		<p>Colleague Virkkunen discussing with student Hamel in 2013 during a visit at Laval University.</p>
<p>We have flown to a Quebec Northern land for research purposes with partners (2004)</p>		<p>Colleague Deslandes was invited in 2017 by Saudi Arabia (2017)</p>	

Descriptions of recent or ongoing research

The FAST project

The project *Formation en Alternance Science et Technologie* (FAST) / Development and evaluation of an alternance education program in science and technology was designed for students with learning difficulties and from underprivileged homes (2011-2014). CRIRES documented the effects of entrepreneurship projects on students and the facilitation of career choices (Laferrière et al. 2014). This formative intervention documented the emergence of a hybrid activity (cooperative education) that aimed at student engagement and academic achievement. In this context-bound study, early stages of such an activity consisted in establishing PénArt, meant to enable high school students with difficulties to start up their own business at school. It involved reaching agreements between a high school and a youth centre so that eleven high school students could engage in the production and selling of their branded t-shirt. At the frontiers of their respective activity system, students, youth workers, special education teachers and members of the school board took actions to cross boundaries and redefine their interrelations. CHAT framework and analysis were fruitful for documenting the development of a new object-oriented activity. Actions taken by participants but also the examination of their motives emphasized tensions and contradictions that were key moments in the emergence of the hybrid activity. Application of broader interpretive concepts such as expansive learning added to the understanding that, in a conflicting situation, a collective's agentic actions create an expansive form of learning and, in the case of PénArt, led to a successful entrepreneurship experience.

Change laboratory (CL) capacity to foster change in the context of cooperative education in Quebec revealed to be successful. The students ended enrolling in a regional entrepreneurship contest and won it. That was a significant event especially for students with low self-esteem linked with their performance at school. The insights afforded by a year of collaboration and intervention led to a better understanding of the developmental trajectory of the emergence of such a hybrid activity, including the inevitable tensions and contradictions as well as turning points necessary for its expansion. In short, the collective negotiation of roles (division of labour) made it possible for the school community to meet conditions and lift constraints. For students, the target outcomes had been to increase their motivation toward school, but also to explore career choices and find meaning in pursuing schooling. The multivoicedness expressed in this CL had an impact on the school organization. This research was supported by a Quebec grant to CRIRES members (CRQ-SC, 2012-RP-145079).

Project on COMPLEX TEACHERS-PARENTS RELATIONSHIPS

Collaborative relationships between school and families are increasingly put forward as a means to promote student success and persistence. The main purpose of this study was to identify the areas of tensions and inner contradictions that emerge in the teacher-parent relationships in order to guide them while engaging in individual and collective transformation processes. Relying on Hoover-Dempsey et

al.'s proposed model (2010), we conducted in-depth interviews with volunteered elementary and secondary teachers. Salient findings were discussed in light of the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2015). These include mainly issues of trust versus control when it comes to choosing communication tools and issues related to the hierarchical status and power inside and outside the school when it comes to the redistribution of actions among the school community members.

As a promising research and intervention avenue, this research emphasized the relevance of applying the Change Laboratory method (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) to reflect upon and foster transformative processes, hence, relationships between teachers and parents. A few elements that could become the starting points of a dialogue within the Change Laboratory sessions focusing on parent-teacher relationships were identified. For instance, it appears imperative to increase the awareness of school administrators to the importance of deploying with the teachers a leadership style that is based on humanist values characterized by "caring, empathy, encouragement and reinforcement". It is important not to wait for a political will at the provincial level, but to go forward with school principals who already provide support to their teachers in the work with parents and to hope for a snowball effect. It is also vital to better support parents in their parenting role and to sensitize them to the importance of prioritizing their children's schooling. The culture of "clientelism" seems to give more power to parents than they had in the past and to open the door to greater expectations and greater demands on the part of the whole society. It is a fertile ground for excessive requests and mistrust in the relationships between teachers and parents that are amplified by performance requirements and challenges associated with diverse family structures and situations. It is no longer just a dichotomy between advantaged and disadvantaged families but it is about conditions involving several risk factors interacting with each other and with processes.

SOURCE. Deslandes, R., Barma, S. & Morin, L. (2015). Understanding complex relationships between teachers and parents. *International Journal about Parents in Education* 9 (1), 131-144.

Descriptions of recent or ongoing formative interventions

School and Family Collaboration and Learning Assessment Practices

Context. A myriad of national and international studies have underlined the importance of family-school-collaboration and communication to foster students' success and school perseverance. In Quebec (Canada), learning assessment practices remain an actual concern as stated in the Ministry of Education's policy orientations to improve students' educational achievement (MEES, June 2017). In this study, we draw on findings collected from four previous studies conducted

within our research program on S-F collaboration in the context of learning assessment.

Objective. Our main research question reads as follows: How would we make sense of the findings and of the tools and actions that were put forward in our previous research? The objectives of this paper are thus (1) to identify the tensions and contradictions that emerged in our previous works, and (2) to propose a two activity systems cross-boundary model in providing a new solution to the current problem.

Theoretical Framework. To deepen our understanding, we refer to the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2001, 2007) that is a well-known triangular model of an activity system (always the unit of analysis) having six poles: subjects, object-oriented, tools, community, rules and division of labor. Two key concepts are put into play: contradictions and boundary-crossing. We thus focus on the tensions/contradictions arising and decreasing as different activity systems interact. Using the Expansive Learning Theory, we illustrate the possible boundary-crossing actions that we hypothesize. To do so, the Change Laboratory Method is introduced as a means to foster expansive learning actions for a new form of activity (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013).

Findings. Contradictions are being observed in both the parents' and the teachers' activity systems. As an example, there seems to be opposition between parents' will to be involved in monitoring child's progress (*rules* pole) and their reported misunderstanding of the report cards and the evaluation sheets (*tools* pole). As another example, on one hand, teachers expect parents to understand the assessment practices and on the other hand, they question their interest, their availability and their will to obtain formation (*rule* tools).

Impact. Whether according to parents 'or teachers' perceptions, our studies have put into light some ambiguities and tensions. In the light of Expansive Learning Theory, we propose the Change Laboratory methodology as an instrument producing activity system to enhance parent-teacher collaboration. There seems to be issues of trust building and communicating between parents and teachers. After the presentation of a hypothesized two activity systems cross-boundary model in modelling a new solution, we discuss the implications for education policy.

SOURCE. Deslandes, R. & Barma, S. (2018).

A major initiative, entitled Tournée R_École is underway. It is conducted by the network PERISCOPE that is devoted to perseverance at schooling and school success. CRIRES is a key player in this network. In Phase One, conversations have occurred in different regions of Quebec for identifying teachers' key preoccupations and needs, and research-interventions projects are being codesigned. We foresee that change laboratories and formative interventions will result from Phase Two. See http://www.periscope-r.quebec/fr/tournee_R_ecole

Published papers

Barma, S., Laferrière, T., Lemieux, B., Massé-Morneau, J., & Vincent, M.-C. (2017). Early stages in building hybrid activity between school and work: the case of PénArt. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30(6), 669-687.

doi:10.1080/13639080.2017.1294247

Barma, S., Lacasse, M., & Massé-Morneau, J. (2015). Engaging discussion about climate change in a Quebec secondary school: A challenge for science teachers. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 4, 28-36.

Deslandes, R. & Barma, S. (2016). Revisiting the challenges linked to parenting and home-school relationships at the high school level. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 39(4), p. 1-32.

Deslandes, R., Barma, S. & Massé-Morneau, J. (2016). Teacher's views of the school community support in the context of a science curricular reform. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(2), 220-232. doi :10.5539/jel.v5n2p220

Laferrière, T. (2017). Les défis de l'innovation selon la théorie de l'activité: le cas de l'école (éloignée) en réseau. *Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 40 (2). Available at <http://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/3110>

Laferrière, T., Barma, S., Gervais, F., Hamel, C., Allaire, S., & Breuleux, A. (2012). Collaborative Teaching, Learning, and Knowledge Building: The Case of the Remote Networked Schools Initiative. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 40, 96-113.

Laferrière, T., Barma, S., Bader, B., Beaumont, C., DeBlois, L., Gervais, F. et al., (2011). L'étude de la réussite scolaire au Québec : une analyse historicoculturelle de l'activité d'un centre de recherche, le CRIRES. *Éducation et Francophonie*, 39(1), 156-182.

Laferrière, T., & Allaire, S. (2010). Développement professionnel d'enseignantes et d'enseignants : les passeurs de frontière qui façonnent l'École éloignée en réseau. *Éducation et formation*, e293, 102-120. Available : <http://ute3.umh.ac.be/revues/include/download.php?idRevue=9&idRes=74#page=101>

Larouche, C. & Savard, D. (2016). Gouvernance, diversité et évaluation de la performance des universités : tensions et perspectives. Dans P. Doray & C. Lessard, *50 ans d'éducation au Québec* (p.159-168). Québec, Canada: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Viau-Guay, A. & Hamel, C. (2017). L'apprentissage expansif réalisé au sein d'une communauté professionnelle d'apprentissage en formation professionnelle. *Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 40(3), 1-34.

Presentations or talks

Barma, S., Lessard, A., Deslandes, R. & Bourdon, S. (2016, juin). *Planning and implementing two CL sessions to foster learning actions amongst participants*. Symposium "Transforming educators' mere work into collaborative practices to enhance learning" dans le cadre de la 7th Nordic Conference on Cultural and Activity Research (ISCAR), Helsingor, Danemark.

Barma, S., Deslandes, R. et Sannino, A. (2016). Actes de colloques *Le Laboratoire du Changement (Lab_C) : une méthodologie interventionniste (« formative interventions ») pour reconceptualiser les relations de travail entre les partenaires*. Communication lors du Colloque 20 - PÉRISCOPE : méthodologies dérivées de perspectives socioculturelles pour composer avec les enjeux de la recherche en partenariat. Congrès de l'ACFAS, 13 mai, Montréal.
<http://lel.crires.ulaval.ca/oeuvre/periscope-methodologies-derivees-de-perspectives-socioculturelles-pour-composer-avec-les>

DeBlois, L. & Barma, S. (2017, June). *Identification de contradictions dans l'activité d'enseignants du primaire devant la compétence à résoudre des problèmes mathématiques*. Didactique Professionnelle – Quatrième Colloque International Entre pressions institutionnelles et autonomie du sujet : quelles analyses de l'activité en situation de travail en didactique professionnelle?, Lille, France.

Laferrière, T., Breuleux, A., Allaire, S., Hamel, C., & Turcotte, S. (2017, March). Infrastructure Support for Boundary Crossing and Teacher Professional Development: An Activity Theory Perspective. Annual meeting of the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education - Mar 5-9, 2017 – Austin, TX.

Laferrière, T., Deslandes, R., DeBlois, L., Turcotte, S., Larouche, C. & Savard, D. (2017, août). *Symposium PÉRISCOPE: Relations and tensions between two communities of practice: researchers and school practitioners*. International Society for Cultural Historical Activity Research (ISCAR), Québec, Canada.
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http://crires.ulaval.ca/sites/default/files/iscar_periscope_2_cops_tensions.pdf