



# Introduction To Learning

Sociocultural/Situative Perspective

Ed 232C

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Lecture 3

\* Please Note: Much of the text that appears in the up-coming slides have been borrowed from course readings and other supplemental texts.

# Sociocultural Theory and Classroom Assessment

- Inside the Black Box by Black and Wiliam  
12 Critical Points
  - ◆ All teachers make assessments in every class they teach
  - ◆ Studies show that formative assessment produce significant and substantial learning gains
  - ◆ In successful approaches, students are actively involved

- ◆ Formative assessment helps low achievers more than other students
- ◆ The most successful assessments affect students motivation and self-esteem and engage pupils in self-assessment
- ◆ The best assessments want to develop understanding rather than rote and superficial learning; they emphasize quality of work rather than competition
- ◆ What is needed is a culture of success, backed by a belief that all students can achieve
- ◆ Assessments should tolerate silence that allows students to think things out

- ◆ Assessments should possess flexibility and confidence to deal with the unexpected
- ◆ One obstacle to successful assessment is teachers' beliefs that some students are not capable of learning
- ◆ One goal of formative assessments should be to locate students areas of “untapped potential” -- zpd
- ◆ Each teacher must find ways of developing and incorporating formative assessment into his or her own practices and patterns of teaching and learning -- Let's give it a try... but first remember to consider the following possible approaches ...

# Informal Methods of Assessment

- Checklists, inventories, and interviews
- Portfolios and sample work
- Dialogue journals and learning logs help students reflect on their learning
- Anecdotal records
- Systematic observations
- Questioning and interactions
- Conferences
- Collaborative learning
- Student self-evaluations

# The Zone of Proximal Development

- Vygotsky defined the zone of proximal development as the difference between a child's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."
- He argued that assessment should examine the the realm of activity where the potential for growth is greatest (the area of potential development)

- Vygotsky argued that optimum instruction will take place within the zpd just ahead of the students' level of readiness
- Following the approach to formative assessment that we have just described, we can respond to the statement by Vygotsky that says: “instruction is good only *when it proceeds ahead of development*, when it awakens and rouses to life those functions that are in the process of maturing or in the zone of proximal development (1956, p. 278)
- It is in this way that assessment will drive instruction that will play an extremely important role in development