Working Relationally in and Across Practices. A Cultural-Historical Approach to Collaboration. Anne Edwards (Ed). Cambridge University Press, New York, USA, 319 pp., ISBN 9781-107-11037-3 Hardback.

The work of professionals involves learning that underpins the essence of change, yet relational aspects of professional work is generally underrated and undervalued, and remains invisible. This is because everyone's interest is more in the results - the outcomes of what is being changed. The importance of healthy collaborations with stakeholders across practices and boundaries in reaching a common understanding of complex issues before co-constructing solutions facilitates responsive collaborations needed for genuine change in mindsets and practices. Doing *what matters* most indicates serious commitment through mutuality. This book edited by Anne Edwards is founded on the interests of all those involved in projects – professionals, end users, clients etc. This book is the first collation of international cases on making relational work visible. It builds on a comprehensive set of earlier research and publications by Edwards. This contributions here from international authors provide practical examples of relational work by professionals and the outcomes of such work. The examples give credence to the importance of relational work.

In Chapter 1 Edwards sets the framework for the book by eloquently explaining three key concepts – *relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency* – that form the foundation for relational work for professionals. She considers these as conceptual tools and anchors her interpretations in Vygotsky's social cultural theory and Leont'ev's introduction to the cultural-historical theory. Several authors of chapters in this book also use these as the founding theories. In Chapter 1, Edwards draws on her own work on these concepts and provides examples to illustrate their applications. A brief, yet delicate explanation (see page 3) makes her points incontestable. She introduces the term 'common knowledge' to denote mutual understandings and sees this as a tool and also a resource. Her explanation of how common knowledge is constructed (see page 10) is interesting and easy to understand. She aptly uses Derry's (2013) 'space of reasons' to illustrate her point about giving, receiving and seriously considering reasons in communicative spaces (Rönnerman, Edwards-Groves and Grootenboer, 2015) necessary for engaging and committing all actors.

Edwards' introduction to the book and the concepts is not only interesting, but engaging and captivating. She skilfully explains the key concepts upfront, informing readers how the concepts are interpreted in the various chapters and the book as a whole. For instance, the term *practice* has a

distinct meaning in the book – 'knowledge-laden, imbued with cultural values, and emotionally freighted by the motives of those who already act in them' (p. 3). Practices are shaped by participants in particular activities and their identities. She contends that relational work has a transactional feature. However, she rightfully cautions that there are ground rules for building common knowledge (see p. 12).

The book is structured in three parts:

I   Working relationally in the professions with six chapters

II   Working relationally in networks with five chapters

III   Working relationally in research with four chapters.

The chapters by international authors illustrate examples of how the same set of concepts (*relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency*) are used in different contexts and in different ways. This enriches understandings about relational practice. In Chapter 2 Hopwood's case example of short-term residential interventions highlights partnership models where professionals and clients collaborate to deconstruct issues and create common knowledge. Aptly described as reciprocal learning, the collaborators co-construct common knowledge and co-configure their practice. Through responsive collaboration, drawing on the richness of multiple forms of expertise, the participants come to understand what matters to all and then focus on addressing the object of the activity. Hopwood stresses the practice perspective of knowledge he sees as a resource. He considers professional practice as being about questioning, reshaping and collective knowledge–making (Edwards and Daniels, 2012). During this process, they also reshape their relationships. Another example of building common knowledge with partners and the use of relational agency is reported in Chapter 3 by Nuttall. His commentary is on how relational agency develops over time. He analyses the challenges of power and status in interprofessional work and how experts negotiate these inequalities. His case study is based on how professionals of different status in a hospital site negotiate common knowledge and understandings to achieve the objects of their work. Here, the motives and resources of each other are recognised to build common knowledge which becomes the 'glu' to acknowledge others' knowledge and apply strategies to achieve the object of their activities. Chapter 4 highlights material resources as a second stimuli. Sannino and Engestrom discuss the transformative nature of relational agency by drawing on theories on boundary crossing, horizontal learning, hybridity and syncretism (see p. 59). These theories draw attention to the 'emancipatory potential of differences, of movement, connections and encounters between qualitatively different perspectives, positions, competences, and traditions' (p. 50). The authors argue that 'relational

agency can serve as a strong resource to explore expansive learning possibilities also by provoking rather than only negotiating new interpretations and conceptualisations of the object activity' (p. 60). They propose double stimulation as a mechanism to overcome conflicting motives through relational agency. Chapter 5 from Chile relates to a case of newly appointed school principals using common knowledge to build institutional practices. Montecinos, Leiva, Campos, Ahumada and Galdames analyse the use of relational expertise, relational agency and common knowledge as a tool box for school principals for social influence. They argue that common knowledge needs to be aligned with motives of all actors, and for school principals in their case studies, to the strategic intentions and teachers and students' motives and everyday practices. Chapter 6 gives an example of Derry's idea of giving and asking for reasons, thereby leading to productive commitments. Here Rai stresses the importance of making reasons explicit so that participants are able to understand and commit to reasons for 'what matters'. Chapter 7 by Walters, Daniels and Weitz present an example of using the relational concepts to engage with first generation students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in three different departments in a university setting. They use participatory action research to analyse responsive pedagogies across three pilot studies.

Chapters 8 to 12 highlight working relationally in networks and present case examples of how the concepts are applied in different practice situations. Chapter 8 by Hakkarainen, Hytonen vekkaila and Paonen from Finland bring to light conceptual and methodological implications of relational analysis drawn from four studies that illustrate a shift from individualist model to networks. The second chapter from Finland, Chapter 9 by Seppanen and Toiviainen shows how relational agency generates mediational tools as resources. Their account is about five service networks working and collaborating with clients. Their research shows that although network tool and means of collaboration contribute to relational agency, these tools can also include or exclude, and also enable or constrain creation of common knowledge. Chapter 10 by Fancourt gives another example of intersecting practices shared between a school and a university. He extends his theoretical framework to include organisational narratives and uses Gioia and Chittipedi's (1991) concepts 'sensegiving' and 'sensemaking' as tools to construct common knowledge. Fancourt reports on how a Deanery narrative became a resource for collaboration. The authors of Chapter 11, Thompson, Dolan, Mayer, Roll and Yeoman provide challenging, yet an interesting example of building common knowledge to overcome the barriers of conflicting motives. The case of a multinational corporation balancing business and social issues through relational work is inspiring, but the authors express concerns about the sustainability of the change noted during the pilot initiative. In Chapter 12, Fleer, Dunn and Harrison use relational concepts to develop a research tool used for evaluation of

interprofessional collaboration, building common knowledge and implementing relational agency and expertise. They developed a Relational Agency Framework which became a tool to support multidisciplinary networks with setting up projects purposed to improve assessment practices.

Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16 concentrate specifically on working relationally in research. In Chapter 13 Hasse discusses the use of material artefacts such as iPads in intervention research. She argues that in developmental work researchers need to be aware of 'forceful relations' (p. 229) and culturally embedded non-human artefacts. Hedegaard, in Chapter 14, explains the place of temporal roles of researchers in changing practices. She uses her study with professionals in kindergarten and how they practice conflicts with preparing children for school. Her study alluded to ways in which researchers contribute to common knowledge that helps mediate professional practice. Stamou and Edwards focus on knowledge exchange and its impact in Chapter 15. Their case is about relationships between researchers and their participants to use a relational approach to knowledge exchange for impact. They note of implications for researchers, research design and funding bodies. The author of Chapter 16, Bantawa, introduces the concept of epistemic architecture and draws on a two year ethnographic study in a zoo. Relational expertise and development of common knowledge were the key conceptual tools that aligned the motives and expertise of the participants (two scientists).

Chapters 2 – 12 contribute to both theoretical and methodological matters. Chapters 13 to 16 specifically advance research design and methodologies for the three concepts. In the final chapter Edwards thoughtfully synthesises the various uses of the three concepts. What is presented in this book is useful for professionals, but is equally important and helpful for students, researchers and academics. The book, especially the concepts of relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency, is highly recommend for tertiary education students engaged in work integrated learning, professionals and service providers. When students understand the notion of relational work they can be more engaged and agentic in securing learning and be more engaged in their work integrated learning experiences. The strength of the book includes clarity in writing. The authors articulate their points very clearly. The sections in each chapter follow a logical structure. Suggestions and arguments are embedded in rich theoretical frame and well supported with relevant literature. Perhaps a limitation is missing suggestions about the next phase of research to further grow this important field which has great potential for change in practices. Overall, the content reflects the purpose listed by the author. The book makes a significant contribution to the field of relational practice.

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