

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ZPD (EXPANDED)

1. The zpd may apply in any situation in which, while participating in an activity, individuals are in the process of developing mastery of a practice or understanding of a topic.
2. The zpd is not a context-independent attribute of an individual; rather it is constructed in the interaction between participants in the course of their joint engagement in a particular activity.
3. To teach in the zpd is to be responsive to the learner's current goals and stage of development and to provide guidance and assistance that enables him/her to achieve those goals and, at the same time, to increase his/her potential for future participation.
4. To learn in the zpd does not require that there be a designated teacher; whenever people collaborate in an activity, each can assist the others, and each can learn from the contributions of the others.
5. Some activities have as one of their outcomes the production of an artifact, which may be used as a tool in a subsequent activity. Representations - in e.g. art, drama, spoken, or written text - of what has been done or understood are artifacts of this kind; engaging with them can provide an occasion for learning in the zpd.
6. Learning in the zpd involves all aspects of the learner and leads to the development of identity as well as of skills and knowledge. For this reason, the affective quality of the interaction between the participants is critical. Learning will be most successful when it is mediated by interaction that expresses mutual respect, trust and concern.
7. Learning in the zpd involves multiple transformations: of the participants' potential for future action and of the cognitive structures in terms of which it is organized; of the tools and practices that mediate the activity; and of the social world in which that activity takes place.
8. Development does not have any predetermined end, or telos; although it is characterized by increasing complexity of organization, this does not, in itself, constitute progress. What is considered to be progress depends on the dominant values in particular times and places, which are both contested and constantly changing. The zpd is thus a site of conflict and contradiction as well as of unanimity; the transformations it engenders lead to diversity of outcome which may radically change as well as reproduce existing practices and values.

(Wells, 1999 p. 333)