# Chapter 8
# Beyond Pathologizing Education: Advancing a Cultural Historical Methodology for the Re-positioning of Children as Successful Learners

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**Abstract** The field of early years education has in recent times received increasing policy and research attention due in part to the growing evidence that investing early in education increases the lifelong chances of children. Emerging from this focus on early education has also been a multidisciplinary approach (e.g. educators, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers) for supporting children and families. Unfortunately, in some situations this has meant that particular theoretical models for interpreting children's behaviours at school have pathologised their everyday interactions. In this chapter we report on two case examples, where a medical model is used to explain children's behaviours, resulting in a deficit view of the children. In contrast, we argue for a holistic conception of the child in the context of family and community for interpreting children's behaviours in school. In drawing upon the concept of perezhivanie, communication, spaces of socialisation, emotions, and forms of subjectivation, we show how an alternative reading of the children in the case studies can be made when different theoretical and research lenses are used. We argue for the need to move away from a traditional medical model for explaining school behaviours where education becomes pathologised and children are *othered*, and suggest that a cultural–historical methodology allows for the reinterpretation of children who are positioned in deficit as successful learners.

## 8.1 Introduction

The topic of *othering* has traditionally not been the focus of cultural–historical psychology. *Othering* is taken to mean that individual processes should not be defined as inherent to the individuals or as separate from the complex social

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networks in which social life takes place. Even though the topic of *othering* from other theoretical traditions has been studied, we believe that a cultural–historical examination of this ongoing problem can foreground the social practices and personal orientations of individuals in new ways. Through the presentation of two case studies, we make visible how a traditional medical model when used in education generally, positions children in deficit. Our focus is not on special education per se, where a medical model predominantly features (see Bottcher 2012 for a critique), but rather on general education, where a medical model appears to be increasingly being used for understanding children who interact in ways that are different to teachers' expectations (Daniels and Hedegaard 2011; Gindis 2003; Portes and Vandeboncoeur 2003).

We specifically advance the topic of children who are positioned in deficit during the learning process, and who are until today *treated* in schools as if they carry a learning difficulty pathogen. Instead of being conceptualised as an educational problem, perceived difficulties are treated as a medical problem and these children are excluded in one way or another from the mainstream pedagogical practices of the school. The problem is still more complicated when the teachers convince parents that their children should be medicalised to deal with the perceived learning difficulties.

In this chapter our proposal is to draw upon and advance concepts that were first introduced by Vygotsky, but which we believe are helpful for making visible in research how some educational settings have medicalised the education process and *othered* children who have learning difficulties. The concept of perezhivanie, communication, spaces of socialisation, emotions, and forms of subjectivation are used to analyse the case studies, and to advance a methodology that pushes against a traditional medical model that is increasingly being used in education contexts. We begin this chapter by discussing the genealogy of these concepts, followed by a presentation of the case studies, concluding on the methodological principles for making visible the deficit positioning of children. It is through making visible the relations between the researcher/adults and the children in each case study, that we advance our cultural–historical methodology for researching and re-positioning the participants as successful school learners.

## 8.2 The Historical Foundations of Cultural–Historical Research

The field of psychology has increasingly advanced the cultural and social dimensions of human practices as the basis for studying the development of humans, and this brings to our urgent attention the need to clearly define the specific characteristics of a cultural–historical approach as originally introduced in Soviet psychology. As a rigorous treatment of the topic is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Sect. 8.3 for further details), we simply acknowledge here that we define cultural–historical approach as that which characterises trends found in Soviet

psychology which recognises the cultural, social and historical genesis of human consciousness whilst simultaneously centred on the richness of individuals as active agents of social life. Scholars such as Vygotsky, Rubinstein, Ananiev, Miasichev, Bozhovich and Zaporozhets belong to the old generation of soviet psychologists, including Zinchenko and Davydov, who were active in Vygotsky's last period of research, whilst Abuljanova, Lomov, Brushlinsky and Chudnovsky belong to a younger generation of soviet psychologists (see Sect. 8.3). Their scholarship is representative of the works we collectively draw upon in conceptualising a cultural–historical view of development.

In this chapter we draw upon Vygotsky's definitions as found in "Psychology of Art" and those that he came back to between 1932 and 1934, and which he advanced further in the last years of his life, introducing new concepts, such as sense, social situation of development, and stressing the relevance of emotions. These developments represented an important step forward for overcoming some constraints that up until today are considered as the main concepts in cultural–historical research, but which are often represented as an expression of a mechanical social determinism (e.g. concepts of reflection, internalisation and the identification of psychological processes as internal activities). The concept of perezhivanie was retaken by Vygotsky in his last works, principally in "The problem of Environment" (Vygotsky 1994) and in "The crisis at age seven" (Vygotsky 1998), which represented an important premise for a new comprehension of human development (see Sect. 8.1). Elkonin (1971) stated, "Until today the main insufficiency in the study of the child's psychological development is the gap between the cognitive and affective processes" (p. 9). In turn, Zaporozhets pointed out another deficit mainly associated with activity theory:

> Essentially for as long time we were forced to be content with the fact that some external correlations were established between activity and mental processes …. although the mechanism of these changes and the very nature of these mental processes were never studied in particular. (Zaporozhets 1995, p. 14)

Both quotations address two of the main consequences of an objective and instrumental psychology; the exclusion of emotions and the ontological "vacuum" of the psychological processes, which are replaced by its identity with external operations.

As has been discussed in Sect. 8.1 and drawn upon by others in Sect. 8.2 of this book, the concept of perezhivanie developed by Vygotsky represented a new moment in the study of human motives that considered both the psychological operations and performances that characterise themselves in the person's perezhivanie at that moment in which they are socially interacting. According to Vygotsky (1994), perezhivanie is the unit of environmental and personal features of the child: "any event or situation in a child's environment will have a different effect on him [sic] depending on how far the child understands its sense and meaning" (p. 343). Vygotsky (1994) carefully examined the relations between emotions and cognition through illustrating how the same children in the same situation can be experiencing the same environment differently, because of how they consciously

relate to that same environment (see also Sect. 8.1, and Fleer and March and Fleer in Sect. 8.2).

Perezhivanie makes clear the motivational character of any human performance, but as has been made explicit in the first session of this book, *perezhivanie* remained open in Vygotsky's work, allowing the concept to be sensitive to new uses and interpretations. This has also been noted in the recent works devoted to this concept (see the special issue of Mind, Culture and Activity, Volume 23, Issue 4, 2016).

One point we advance in our study, is the concept of communication. Communication is understood as a dialogical field and not as a linear and sequential relation. The relevance of the adult for the child's development is given by the emotional richness of their communication: the adult is never a mere support of operational activity with objects. The relationship between the early communication of children and adults, and the emotional development of children, has been a weak point in many long-standing explanations of the child's development. Today it continues to be mistreated. The omission of communication in Leontiev´s theoretical position was noted by Lomov and Abuljanova, but also from researchers who worked under his influence, such as Smirnov (1993) and Davydov (2002).

In our theoretical interpretation, the child lives through different relational contact with adults, and with a high level of emotional involvement. Scholars like Spitz (1945), Bowlby (1958) and Emde (1983) in psychoanalysis, and Bozhovich (1968) in educational psychology, have stressed that the child very early on begins to react to the affection received from adults, which in turn support and provoke relevant emotional expressions. Bozhovich in drawing upon Vygotsky's theory explained these early emotional behaviours, as part of the child´s early relational impressions and system of relations, while Spitz emphasised the quality of the affective relation with the adults. Smirnova (1996) criticised the way in which communication was treated in cultural–historical psychology:

> According to the positions of Vygotsky the social world of the adults that surround the children represents the necessary condition for the human development…. It is clear that this comprehension of the process of psychological development implies to consider in the foreground, the role of the communication with the adults. Therefore, for the proper author and his followers, the adult acts only as mediator between the child and the culture, like an abstract "carrier" of signs, norms and forms of activity, but not as a concrete and alive person. Despite the recognition by all of the role of communication with adults in the child psychological development, the process of communication in itself was not subject of research in the cultural–historical approach. (Smirnova 1996, p. 87)

In providing this historical background, we seek to show how there is still much need for developing the existing concepts in cultural–historical theory, and for researching contemporary problems. As we will show through the case studies that are presented in the next section, we seek to foreground the many new questions that emerge during fieldwork, which need to be conceptualised and developed in new ways. The contradictions that emerge in the fieldwork and analysis require a level of border crossing that is not commonly undertaken. The methodological perspective of Soviet psychology was generally experimental and naturalistic and

gives some theoretical guidance for the problem posed in this chapter. However, it is also possible to identify a constructive–interpretative research approach within a cultural–historical tradition. As Zinchenko (2009) explicitly stated, "Since the subject domain that is called consciousness is by far not always given directly, it must be defined and constructed" (p. 53). This is a clear and important reference to a constructive–interpretative methodology in Russian psychology, and which we take up explicitly through our elaboration of our perspective of a cultural–historical methodology for understanding more holistically the child in school as a learner.

In this chapter we are joining forces to present two ways of conceptualising in practice, qualitative research from a cultural–historical standpoint. Although we have used different devices and even different concepts, there are a lot of convergences in our goal to make visible the dynamic of *othering*. As will be shown in the first example, capturing the child's affective relationship and their subjective and affective position at home and at school in unity is a key for understanding the child's perspective on entering into the practice tradition of schooling. In the second example, we show a broader conception of perezhivanie, adding to what has been presented in Sect. 8.1. We make visible through the dialogue between the researcher and a child, the perceived learning difficulties, and the new understandings and positioning of the child.

Both case studies take as their focus the relevance of the adult in their affective relations with children. Affective relations are seen as an important device for opening up new social spaces, practices and activities in the school. In the first example, the focus is on the relations between the mother and the child. In the second example, it is the relations between the researcher and the child. Both communication and the new social spaces in the classroom that open up are essential for the emergence of new perezhivani and the corresponding network of subjective resources. In this study, these are conceptualised as inseparable from the children's performances in school. The active communication of educators and children, as well as between children are important processes to be attended to in educational setting. Without a holistic conception of research which takes into account the psychological and affective dimensions between the researcher and the participants, the aim of understanding learning in educational settings can never be fully reached.

## 8.3 Case Study 1: Beginning School

We begin this section by introducing a case study of a family whose eldest child Andrew (5 years) begins school in Australia. The observations began in May and concluded in October in the second year of the research. Schools in Australia begin in February and finish in December. Over 50 h of video observations were recorded across three observation periods (where approximately 5 visits were made to the family home or school) (see Fleer and Hedegaard 2010; and Hedegaard and Fleer 2013 for further details).

The focus of the research methodology was on following the children's per-spective through documenting their everyday life practices. This meant capturing at different times, Andrew getting ready and going to school in the morning, the morning walk to school, the evening meals, breakfast routine, going to bed, going shopping, eating snacks, and playing inside or outside of the house. Hedegaard et al. (2012) state that, "Children's perspectives involve *children's experiences.* When the notion of children's perspective is used in this way, an important goal is to explore individual children's lifeworlds and subjective meaning-making" (p. ix). In line with Bozhovich (2009), subjective meaning-making in this case example, includes affective imagination.

### 8.3.1   Observation Period 1

During the first observation period Andrew had been at school from February to May (which included Easter holiday period of 2 weeks).

When we first visited Andrew at home, he and his siblings greeted us with great enthusiasm in the entry hall and took us into the family room. The family room was furnished with a cupboard that held a large screen and DVD player, a long fish tank that took up most of the wall room on one side of the room, two single soft chairs and a 3 seater lounge chair. Andrew greeted us with smiles and moved from one end of the room to the other, often jumping up and down in the same spot, and pirouetting his body in small circles, but always observing us, the mother and his siblings. From time to time the father would appear in the family room, contribute to the conversation, and then disappear into another room. This was also the practice of the mother, however, she stayed talking to the children and the researchers for longer. After a brief period in the family room, the children also expanded their movement to the other parts of the house, but always returning to the family room within a few seconds, as though no walls separated them from the researchers. When the researchers showed the children the digital cameras, the children each confidently took a camera, and held it by its cord, and moved about the house, swinging the cameras in small circles, as well as swinging the cameras through the air as full arm movements, narrowly missing each other as they walked and swung. The mother and father at different times, showed the children how to look into the camera and to click the button to take a photograph. Andrew showed interest in this, and took a number of photographs, whilst his siblings swung the cameras around in constant motion as they moved from room to room. His siblings at the commencement of the study were aged approximately 16 months, 2 and 4 years.

The subsequent observations in the family home did not involve using the still cameras, but rather the researchers video recorded everyday family, school and childcare activities. The children showed some initial interest in the digital video cameras, but usually spent their time moving about the family home—inside and outside. The children's experiences over the 18 months, showed continual

movement at home and this appeared to be the common practice tradition, and the accepted way of living everyday life for Andrew. His lifeworld and subjective meaning-making were all tied up with movement (see also Hedegaard and Fleer 2010).

How the family practice traditions create the conditions for children's development when they enter other institutions, such as when starting school (where a different practice tradition exists, such as being seated most of the day to listen and work), can give different conditions and create an emotional response to the new social and material environment. On one of the observations made of Andrew during the first observation period, the Mother reported the following to the researchers:

Mother:      He's had a few problems [at school]. But—he's, got a problem with not focusing. Which is causing a lack of concentration.
Researcher:  Right yeah yes.
Mother:      But he's just got to like learn to focus a lot more on more concentration and I think—he'll be right.
Mother:      … but yeah, of a night time when I pick him up I ask her [the teacher] how he's going. She said today he wasn't focusing properly. He had a bit of trouble focusing—but, I mean, he's still only, like in the end of May.

Included in the empirical material gathered by the researchers, is not just what the child is personally experiencing, but also the "explorations and analyses of children's life conditions" (Hedegaard et al. 2012: ix) that are emotionally experienced (Vygotsky 1994). If we are to understand Andrew's perspective, we must also determine his social participation and affective relations under the different social conditions that are beyond family life. The mother's interpretation of what appeared to matter in school—being able to focus—continued to be a source of distress for the mother, which then influenced her interactions with Andrew at home —as we see in the following example from Observation Period 2.

### 8.3.2 Observation Period 2

In the next observation period the concerns for Andrew's behaviour by the school, as perceived by the Mother, had emotionally intensified. As will be seen in the following extract from a home observation, Andrew's *behaviour* was now linked to the need for "expert testing" and potential chemical intervention—to support him focussing. The terms attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD) syndrome are now featured in the Mother's discourse:

It is 6.30 in the morning. Andrew is in his pyjamas. He goes into the kitchen and looks for a cloth to wipe his legs. His mother comes into the kitchen and asks him what he is doing, to which he replies, "Wash my leg". His mother asks, "What for?". Andrew explains, "They got yucky on them". The mother leaves the kitchen to find a cloth to dry his legs. As she

returns she says, "Andrew you are disgusting". The mother then turns to the researchers whilst addressing Andrew and says, "I said to Gloria and Marilyn [the researchers] you do this for attention, more than anything at all". The mother dries Andrew's legs whilst saying, "What did you smear the honey all down your legs for? It is disgusting". Andrew smiles and laughs. His mother replies, "You think it is funny. I don't. No one else is laughing at ya". The mother explains to the researchers, "He does what he does, more for the attention. He follows, there are a couple kids in his class, in prep, they got, ADHD, … one boy stayed down in prep, I noticed a difference…. hyperactivity, see what it does to them".

Andrew moves around the kitchen area and the mother follows his movement and says, "He does this for the attention; he doesn't do it because he is hyperactivity; he does it more for attention; he knows who is here, you or friends, he will just do it and knows standing around and he will do it for seek that attention he is not getting; that's what they are they are telling us [at the school]; they can work on that; its just a matter of not seek that extra attention, and focus on what everyone else is doing… they did the assessment; Alison the speech pathologist, we got a speech pathologist at our school and they actually is on there; on the school assessment that he's got a learning disorder, which is what the ADD is; a learning disorder, has trouble sitting down and concentrating on one thing; he has to be up going off and doing something else; and they take send info to AusChild; and they get their results; and now waiting to get results back from AusChild; and then they probably want to speak to me after school, and then we will work out we can go from and help sit down and focus; to get him to sit down and do anything; he will do something and in 5 min will want to change and do something else".

The mother notices that Andrew has thrown the towel to the ground. She yells at him: "Cut it out. What have you been told at school? Don't try and seek attention. It doesn't work Andrew!". (Home observation, Period 1 Visit 3)

The authority of assessing Andrew through AusChild, through the school speech pathologist, and through explaining to the Mother that Andrew's continual movement was attention seeking, together created a home situation in which the Mother was now naming Andrew's behaviours at home as attention seeking, and changing their personal and emotional relationship. As has been argued by Fisher (2011), when a problem is seen "as within the child or the home background" this can "give rise to reductive remedial measures that locate blame" rather than seeking to try and "understand the nature of the problem by considering the perspective of the learning within the learning context" (p. 49). As was shown in Observation Period 1 and as was found for the whole study (Hedegaard and Fleer 2010), Andrew's subjective position in everyday family life at home was for him to continually move about. However, sitting still and focusing on educational content is an institutional expectation when attending school. Blaming Andrew—as the source of the problem—did little to help him with learning the new practice traditions in the school. Solving the problem through chemical intervention appeared as a medical rather than an educative solution. In order to understand Andrew's development, we need to look at him within the practice traditions he experiences, as well as how he understands the practice traditions of the home and the school. But the child's practice is not static. It is dynamic and changing as Andrew's understanding of the new school practice develops. The differences in practice traditions, created new conditions for Andrew, but also for his mother, and this changed the interactions between Andrew and his mother, who was now blaming Andrew for what was a difficult transition to school.

### 8.3.3  Observation Period 3

In the second year of school, the focus on Andrew's behaviour continues and the Mother's concerns move beyond the school, as she looks for advice from other sources. The Mother speaks to her family doctor, and she is advised to look at his diet, as a potential reason for Andrew's continual movement. Whilst a more holistic view is being sought, the focus is still on "health" and a medical model as the source of authority. In the extract below we see that the mother also speaks to friends, who give alternative suggestions. However, the Mother maintains her concern about the need for chemical intervention recommended by school psychologist.

> Our family doctor, we were talking to him about Andrew and his ADD and all additives in food and stuff…Once a year I buy bottle of cordial at Christmas time, and after that they don't get any of that. Since we tried cutting out the cordial; on the whole, since I been doing that for a couple of weeks; they actually have been a lot better; I give 'em water, give 'em milk, still giving them a bit of apple juice, now and then, as a treat. Noticed the difference in their behaviour - just how they behave; if I give them some lollies or some chocolate, they just go hypo! Andrew can't have that coloured popcorn. It makes him sick, and not only that he … anything that's got additives in it.
>
> When I took Andrew to the psychologist towards end of last year, he said he has got a touch of ADD, or a bit of hyperactivity, anyway they wanted to give him Ritalin. I said Nu. I am not going to put him on that crap. That's a speed bust. There is no way I am going to have him going on that, it just gonna make him more awake…
>
> Apparently fish oil is supposed to be good for them, my friend said, to help with the ADD. (Home interview, Period 3, Visit 1)

The advice received from the Mother's friend contrasts with that received in the first year of school where the Mother's extended family suggested Andrew repeat his first year of school:

> I rather him repeat than have to go on to a say, special development school or something to be able to learn. But yeah I mean if he has to go repeat a grade, then yeah, we'll let him repeat but, hopefully he doesn't have to. (Home observation, Period 1 Visit 2)

A range of perspectives were presented to the Mother over the data gathering period and they are captured in Table 8.1. Andrew's perspective of experiencing school as behaviour was becoming increasingly emotionally charged. A new kind of relationship was emerging for Andrew at school as well as at home. In the example that follows, Andrew's behaviour at school was also affectively experienced through continuously being reprimanded by the teachers, but also through the children reporting on his behaviours to the teachers, as the following example shows.

> Andrew is seated on the carpet at the front of the classroom surrounded by all the children in his class. He is seated towards the back of the group. All the children are facing the teacher. The teacher has a storybook open, and is about to read a story to the group. The area for the children to sit, is marked by a border of masking tape on the carpet. The children sit within the square border and the teacher is seated on a chair outside of the border. Andrew stands and begins to walk back towards the desks away from the group,

**Table 8.1** Pathologising learning

| Extended family perspectives on development presented by mother | Teacher's perspective on development as presented by mother | Protection worker's perspective as presented by mother | Paediatrician's perspective (via the speech therapist) as presented by mother | Family doctor's perspective as presented by the mother | Friend's perspective as presented by the mother |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andrew may need to repeat a year of school or go to a special school if he does not catch up | Andrew has problems with focusing | Department of human services in their visits have assessed the physical and mental development of the children, advising them to buy pencils and paper and to do activities and have discussions with the children | Andrew is diagnosed as having ADD and requiring medication | The family advises the mother to consider Andrew's diet, specifically noting food additives, and products with sugar in them | Using alternative health products |
| Andrew's grandmother lets Andrew's mum read her books on bringing up boys by Steve Biddulph | Andrew is viewed as attention seeking and some form of behaviour management is needed | | To avoid medication, the mother discusses the attention management behaviours she must institute in her interactions with Andrew | | |

keeping a close eye on the teacher. The teacher notices, and asks him to sit down. He says in a timid and quiet voice, "I want to get something". The teacher repeats firmly, "Sit down please". Andrew appears upset by this, but sits down promptly. After a small discussion about the teacher's name (she is filling in for the regular class teacher), she begins reading, but stops after announcing the title of the text, and reprimands other children to sit and listen. Andrew who is now at the back of the group, kneels and pushes his head up in order to see what is going on and also to see the storybook. One child says, "Andrew is supposed to sit on the cross". Another child points and says, "That's the spot there". The teacher does not respond, but says "Can everyone see", to which the children respond in chorus "Yes". She then continues to read. As the teacher reads the book, Andrew looks down to the taped border for the group and picks at it. The teacher notices and says in a commanding voice, "Stop playing with that sticky tape please, right now". She then says sternly, "Come and sit right here (pointing to the cross on the carpet)". Andrew immediately stands, holding his head down, in what appears to be an embarrassed manner, with his face turning red. He walks with arms stiff and head and shoulders slumped down to the front of the group. As he walks he trips, and the teacher asks kindly if he is OK. He does not respond, and sits on the spot next to the teacher. The teacher checks if he can see the book, and then continues to read the story. After a minute, Andrew turns his back away from the teacher and begins to look through the materials close to him. The teacher asks him to stop. Andrew compliantly turns to her appearing to stop, and then as she goes back to reading the book, Andrew continues to play with the materials. The teacher eventually stops reading and asks him again to stop playing with the materials. One of the other children move the box of materials away from Andrew. He gives a scowling look to the girl, and then plays with his fingers. He does not look at the book that the teacher is reading for most of the session. During the story reading, Andrew tears tape and paper, licks these, and then systemically licks his fingers – all with his back facing the teacher. Once again he moves the materials close to him, asking the teacher if he can put them away, to which the teacher says, "Leave them there". As he goes back to playing with the materials, one of the children reports that he is touching things. The teacher asks Andrew to stop. When he later continues this behaviour, another child reports this, but the teacher says, "He has stopped". Eventually the teacher asks Andrew to move to another spot, where he immediately lifts up and down materials that are lying on the table close to him. The teacher says, "Stop touching things, please". (School Observation, Period 3 Visit 1 T6)

What is constant in the observations of Andrew at school is the focus on his behaviour, where a need for solving the problem through chemical intervention (medical field) or through naming it as attention seeking behaviour (teacher perspective) became part of his affective experience of schooling. The children support this surveillance of Andrew's behaviour, by reporting when he does not "pay attention" or when "fiddling with materials" as was noted in the observation above. Having a special marked spot for Andrew also publically signals that he has to sit still at school. What is missing in the school context, is an understanding of the everyday family practices in the home to explain why Andrew may be moving about so much in school. What emerged through the professionals who supported the teachers in the school that Andrew attended was a form of pathologising of learning. The examples given also characterise the growing trend in pathologising any kind of human behaviour into a disorder (Burman 2008).

### 8.3.4 Andrew's Affective Relations and Deficit Positioning

The authority of the institution was creating new demands upon Andrew at home through the perspective of the school about how to manage Andrew. Fisher (2011) says that, "it is the child's interpretation of what matters that orients their actions" (p. 51). When we first observed Andrew at school in Observation Period 1, he wanted to please the teacher, and he wanted to take up the new social position of being a school child as a key "affective relationship between" Andrew "and the environment" (Bozhovich 2009, p. 68). All of Andrew's interactions with the teachers during the three observation periods focused on his behaviour, and consequently this is how Andrew perceived what it meant to be a successful school child (Hedegaard and Fleer 2010). Focusing on behaviour rather than curriculum content oriented Andrew to aspects of schooling that in the long term would result in school failure. Fisher (2011) suggests that as researchers we need to look at "young children's participation in institutional practices" if we are to "understand the nature of underachievement" (p. 52). She shows through case examples of children's underachievement in learning to write, how children:

> …clearly concerned to behave as a school child should behave. The types of action that seem to show these children trying to do the right thing as pupils in a writing lesson included the way in which they used the artefacts provided to support their writing and incidents where they seem to be motivated by pleasing the teacher. (p. 54)

Following the children's intentions as they participate in the institutional practice of doing schooling was a key for understanding Andrew, but also important in Fisher's (2011) study who found that her focus children were experiencing and emotionally relating to schooling through behaviours of pleasing the teacher. But what is missing here is knowing more about the practice traditions of the children from the home so that interpretations of their school participation can be better understood. Researching holistically the practice traditions of Andrew's school and his home (Hedegaard 2009), gave different insights and possible interpretations of how Andrew was emotionally experiencing, interpreting and affectively relating to schooling.

The focus on behaviour maintained throughout the three observation periods, gave an authoritative voice to "testing" and "assessment" where the diagnosis is named and recorded, and this created great anxiety for the family, changing Andrew's interactions with his mother at home. Naming and blaming positioned Andrew in ways that did not support his development across the home and the school: " …actually it is on there; on the school assessment that he's got a learning disorder, which is what the ADD is; a learning disorder …" (Mother). Researching the practice traditions of both the home and the school gave insights into a more holistic and affective interpretation of Andrew's experiences at school. Including in the interpretations the changing emotional conditions for Andrew as a result of the Mother's understanding of the school situation, also helped with better understanding the affective dynamic and changing interpersonal relationship between Andrew and his mother.

We now turn to another case study taken from clinical research in Brazil where the interpersonal relations between a researcher and a child are studied.

## 8.4 Case Study 2: Being at School

In the school documentation, Kevin started school when he was two-and-a-half years old. His mother decided to start working again and she opted to register Kevin into a public day care centre half-time. His mother said that his transition into school was easy. When he was 6 years old, he started attending the first year of the second cycle of primary education. This is where the research was conducted.

According to some of the school staff, Kevin soon attracted the attention of teachers and coordinators as he displayed shy and distant behaviours. He did not maintain relationships with his classmates and spent breaks alone or talking with staff members at the school. As the year passed by, the attention of the teachers was also drawn to Kevin's learning, as it was reported that he was not capable of following the content delivered by the school.

The researcher meets Kevin at the end of October, in his second year of school and in the second cycle of primary education. Kevin is the kind of student that does not cause any type of trouble in the classroom: he is a shy, reserved child whom we could hardly hear as his voice was really soft. Despite the fact that Kevin did not cause any trouble regarding his behaviour in the classroom, he became a big mystery to the pedagogic team due to his learning difficulties. However, the teachers made no effort to establish emotional contact with him, nor to facilitate his contact with the rest of the children. The teachers were only centred on trying to move forward on the problems that they perceived in Kevin's school performance, without considering his feelings of shyness and difficulties with making contact with others, and how this made it difficult for him to centre on what was happening academically in the classroom.

Currently, Kevin is in his third year at school and will probably fail this academic programme. He does not read; is barely able to write his name, and appears unable to recognise the letters that compose his name; displays difficulties in identifying geometrical figures and colours; and is not able to perform mathematical operations. There are many speculations regarding the motives determining Kevin's learning difficulties. Each of the school staff members who have been consulted regarding Kevin's case exposed a different view, but each of these views expressed a congruent language that visibly emerges as an expression of the social subjectivity of the school: the language of the intellectual deficit, of the pathology closely associated with an instrumental–cognitive representation of learning. These included: intellectual deficiency, difficulties to process and store information, short capacity of memory, "his mother is the issue"; sinusitis; problems with his eyes and vision; etc. It is interesting to stress the terms used by professionals of both schools to describe Kevin's learning difficulties.

Due to his learning and psychomotor difficulties, Kevin was directed to the "Specialized Service of Learning Support" in the beginning of 2014 in order to undertake a psychopedagogical evaluation. According to the report made available by the school, following a psychodiagnostic evaluation, Kevin was considered to display an average cognitive potential when compared to his age group.

In relation to Kevin's social and family life, we must say that both are considerably difficult situations. Kevin lives in a very small one-room apartment in the basement of a commercial building, the house having almost no ventilation due to the absence of windows. He currently lives with his mother and a 17-year-old sister. His father abandoned the household when Kevin had just turned 6 years, and after he had just started the first year of the second cycle of primary education. His mother is currently unemployed due to a medical condition, and the household rent comes from a government welfare programme.

Due to security reasons, Kevin is not allowed to play outside the house and therefore has almost no social contact with children of his age group outside the school context. He does not take part in other types of social activities, such as sports, music lessons, etc. Kevin has very few leisure moments and usually spends weekends at home. Issues such as socialisation, social contacts and group integration, make it evident that there is, in Kevin's case, an affective isolation that represents a loss of psychic development and subjective resources needed by him to develop himself in that period of his life.

### 8.4.1 Preparation of the Social Setting of Kevin's Investigation

The researcher participated in the class activities of a group of children undertaking their second year of primary education. At first, she did not aim to achieve a deep emotional contact with the children. The researcher's main interest was to understand how the classroom functioned and how the pedagogic work was organised. During the second week of observations, Kevin approached the researcher and asked:

**K**:  Uncle, can I tell you a story?
**R**:  Of course!

According to the observations, Kevin felt curious about the presence of the researcher even though he was very shy. He found a way to get close to the new person in the classroom. He wanted to tell me a story that the teacher had told the class the day before. I was quite surprised as I had participated in this activity the previous day and had the opportunity to watch the children's behaviour during the exercise. Overall, the children were curious, interested and questioned the teacher constantly. Kevin, however, looked distracted. His look was empty and lost, paying almost no attention to the activity. It was almost as though he was not there at all… On that day, however,

Kevin told the researcher whole story in detail, while holding the book in his hand. He was very interested in telling me the story, as whenever a child approached and interrupted us, he would take a position and calmly state: "I am telling to the uncle a story, wait for your turn". This attitude was amazing given his shy behaviour. However, there was strong evidence that he felt comfortable telling me the story, a fact that permitted him to defend his space of personal relation in a very spontaneous and self-determined way. This gives evidence of how much the emergence of a new position, with its implied affective and spontaneous contact with the other, creates a motivational force for communicating.

Kevin's behaviour was not inspired from any external requirement, but by his curiosity and by the way he enjoyed the contact with the researcher. This led him to assume and defend his position, something completely unexpected from the logic of how he is being treated in the school.

As result of this experience, the researcher worked directly with Kevin. The teacher mentioned that she often heard that Kevin did not have the ability to retain information, to memorise it and later to address the themes he had learned. However, Kevin was able to retell a story he had heard from his teacher the previous day, which corroborated his ability to store and retain information. We can identify once again the main discourses used to frame learning difficulties: cognitive discourse, which refers to cognitive issues and intellectual limitations as the main fact for explaining the learning difficulties.

Kevin appears to have some inherent disabilities in his operational cognitive–intellectual repertory. However, instead of the school looking at the child as an affective, active and socialised person, the teachers act passively, attempting to subordinate him to an assimilative–reproductive set of learning operations without any attention to the interactive–affective dimensions of classroom functioning. After this first encounter, the researcher accompanied Kevin throughout his school tasks.

During these activities, it was acknowledged that Kevin demonstrated difficulties with learning the letters of the alphabet. He was able to sing the alphabet in the right order and relate sounds and letters correctly. If the letters were shuffled, however, or even if we asked Kevin to pronounce the last letter in the alphabet, he would not be able do so, even if he had just sang the alphabet correctly. He would start pronouncing random letters, state that he is tired or simply that he does not know. The evidence for his lack of motivation was great, however, the teacher did not perceive this and she attributed his lack of interest to his learning difficulties. The teacher pointed out: "It is impossible to be interested if he does not understand the principles to follow our explanations", and the researcher proposed: "why don't we invent a game, in which one child's answer could be complemented with another answer", giving the opportunity for the teachers to use resources that facilitate the emergence of a more cooperative–participative way of learning. The teacher openly said that the researcher could help her with actioning this proposal, because she had no idea of how to advance this proposal. Far of feeling better, Kevin felt each time worse by his exposition in front the group, his feeling of failure, and by his feeling of being out from the social group in the classroom. Considering these responses by

Kevin, throughout the moments of classroom activity, the researcher noticed an excessive tiredness in Kevin. Talking with him, Kevin said he usually sleeps quite late because he stays up watching television, and then wakes up very early in the morning. Besides, he constantly complained of untreated sinusitis. A tired child suffering from breathing issues will probably lack the energy to remain 5 h of effective school learning. However, the teachers did not pay any attention to these facts. The diversity of emotions, symbolic processes and feelings resulting from all these classroom practices are inseparable from his familiar and social daily life.

The emergence of new emotions, as result of his relation with the researcher, might change his position in the school as well as change the results of his learning experience. This will represent an important moment in the transition of the child to a more active and curious position, which should represent a first step for Kevin to overcome his learning difficulties. Kevin's main problem, at this moment of his school experience, is that he began school from a familiar life where he was not only understimulated, but where he had very limited opportunities to develop subjective resources for socially integrating into a classroom. Kevin came to the school without the necessary subjective resources for allowing him to respond to the new requirements of this new social situation.

Many times the researcher worked with Kevin for the whole day on a specific letter, but on the next day he would not remember that letter. Teachers said that Kevin was not able to develop learning strategies, with one teacher even stating that his brain resembled a "holed sack", in which things that go in suddenly disappear. We can see how cognitive metaphors dominate teachers' explanations of Kevin's case, creating a framework where the relational efforts to create a bond with Kevin remain out of sight. Even when the researcher was working with him as a substitute teacher, and the teacher realised the efforts made by the researcher while working with Kevin, and approached both and stated: "*You do not need to do that with him. He will not be able to do it. I have tried before, I was his teacher*".

The position of this teacher clearly revealed not only the dominant representations that ruled the school practice, but also the dominant social subjectivity of the school in which the teachers have naturalised that the students with difficulties are not capable of learning, and a belief that nothing could be done. It would therefore be difficult for teachers to realise the individual deficit positioning that was occurring as a result of the low "institutional expectations" of what it meant to be an underachiever. The relationships of the child inside and outside the school were never of interest to the teachers, and therefore the emotions generated in those spaces, and the subjective processes associated with them, were also completely ignored.

These types of statements from teachers would not have a place if there would be effective normative systems for treating children's formative and affective issues, or a capacity-building environment focusing on children's development. How does a child feel when s/he hears from her/his own teacher that s/he is not able to complete a specific task? Which instrument does this child use in order to prove his/her teacher wrong? In Kevin's case, these words affect him in a way that he cannot consciously understand. However, when he faces a learning obstacle he could use the same words his teachers used to affirm that he could not learn. This exclusion of the

affective singular position of the students is one of the elements associated with the growing role of the medicalization evident in the school; if nothing could be done in the educative practice, the child should be medically prescribed as the only way to solve the problem—similar to what was noted in the first case study of Andrew.

Aiming to propose a new activity to Kevin, one different from those traditionally proposed in the school environment, the researcher asked him to bring some board games, like a puzzle, a memory game and a domino, to class on the next day. He was thrilled with the idea. This ludic turn into a new type of task less charged with subjective plots as those usually proposed within school, allowed the researcher to explore the child's cognitive and intellectual repertoire in a new subjective and relational context.

At that moment, our work team had already refuted the idea that Kevin was cognitively incapable of learning. While assembling a puzzle together, Kevin was able to focus while elaborating strategies to pick the ideal pieces to fit the different spaces. He also won several memory games and while playing domino, he practised counting all the dots in the different stones; he did not display any difficulties during those activities. What grasped our attention the most was his performance during the memory game. The cards composing the game had a figure and a name written on it, so the researcher started to ask Kevin about the letters composing the different names on the cards:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Researcher**: | Kevin, what is drawn in this card? |
| **Kevin**: | A plane. |
| | Here begin the new and final part of the Kevin's case |
| **R**: | Can you tell me the letter that word starts with? |
| **K**: | No. |
| **R**: | Shall we repeat the word slowly? |
| **N**: | P-L-A-N-E |
| **R**: | What about now, can you tell me which is the first letter of this word? |
| **N**: | Letter P. |
| **R**: | Well done Kevin! (Bezerra dos Santos 2014, p. 22) |

This situation repeated itself with different words. In different cases Kevin would claim he could not identify the letters. His first reaction was to deny himself the possibility of successfully answering the question. However, once the researcher insisted, and created a new path of being in contact with him, Kevin demonstrated that he could identify the letters. Together with the researcher's skill of keeping in emotional contact with Kevin, the researcher provided him with strategies to help him identifying the letters, such as associating sounds to the letter figures. In many different moments, Kevin would just start guessing, naming most of the letters of the alphabet. In doing this Kevin concentrated on the task laughing with the researcher, thus giving further evidence that Kevin was able to do the task by the change in his emotional set, a fact that was only possible as result of his affective relationship with the researcher. The researcher would then address him regarding this:

**Researcher**:   Kevin, stop guessing and think. We just saw that letter. You know it.

During these moments, our advancement was quite restricted as Kevin could not advance properly in the task of recognising the letters. He was not being able to recognise letters that he had himself recognised only minutes earlier. His approach was to guess random letters, repeating constantly the words of the substitute teacher: "I cannot do it, uncle". At this point, the researcher started looking for other strategies, alternatives to the sound–letter association. He asked Kevin to imagine that inside our heads are different small drawers. Kevin instantly looked at him and smiled. The imaginative act, inside the relational quality within which it appears, had a much stronger potential for generating new emotions associated with confidence and safety, than the formal cognitive set commonly used in all the levels of the teaching practice observed.

The emergence of new subjective senses (see Sect. 8.3), that occurs when emotions evoke new symbolical processes is possible by the dialogical field created by the researcher with the child. It is not our aim in this chapter to study the new subjective senses that emerge in Kevin within his relation with the researcher, but to understand how new emotions emerge in the communication, changing the social position in the classroom, as a process that occurs together with the emergence of new subjective senses.[1] This was also noted in Case Study 1, but as a negative rather than a positive case, because when the school constructed a deficit view of Andrew to the mother, this resulted in a new affective relation between Andrew and his mother at home. In Kevin's case, the invitation to imagine evoked emotions that were simultaneously related to the anticipation of the child, in relation to that which was proposed by the researcher's task. The invitation came for a person who created a very good relationship with him, which in turn permitted him to be motivated by the new task, and this liberated his imagination within which emotions were inseparable from symbolical processes.

Dialogue following the researcher's proposition:

**Researcher**:   Are you imagining Kevin?
**Kevin**:          Yes, uncle.
**R**:              Do you know what the little drawers are for?
**K**:              Yes, to store things.
**R**:              So, Kevin, we will store all the little letters inside these drawers (Bezerra dos Santos 2014, p. 122)

Kevin smiles again, demonstrating that he is enjoying the game. To each word, the researcher asked Kevin to store the initial letter in the drawer, sometimes playing with him: "Be careful so that they doesn't escape". Kevin smiled, his facial expression denoting he was trying to imagine the letters kept inside the drawers. The activity continued in this way.

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[1]Subjective senses are defined by the unity of emotions and symbolical processes, leading to a new unit on which subjective functioning appears as a new ontological reality in relation to what traditionally has been named as psychological. The last chapter in Session 3 will introduce subjectivity, and it is there that this concept is discussed.

**Researcher**:   What about you open the drawer and try to look for the letter inside?

Right away Kevin would confidently state the letter we were looking for. He would stop, think, and in a few seconds state and point to the correct letter. The researcher was able to perceive that Kevin was feeling more confident, getting the letters right more often, he was less insecure. This confidence resulted from a network of subjective senses developed during the course of the task, in which feeling esteem and respect were essential. These feelings were at the same time a result and a condition of Kevin's advancement in the task, contributing decisively to this feeling of pleasure in the tasks he had done. This relation provided him with many affections and symbolical productions that could only be found within the flow of many unfolding subjective senses that emerged during this activity.

The concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations allowed us to understand with more confidence Kevin's emotional and cognitive state, not as an entity or as an intrinsic characteristic, but as a subjective quality produced within a relational–operational space, in the process of development. This theoretical reading is essential for understanding the configuration of complex productions in a child's personality. Kevin demonstrated that he was interested in, and enjoyed the activity, rarely complaining about being tired and even proposed that they invent stories with the letters. The workday was very productive and Kevin suggested that they repeated those exercises more often.

It is interesting to note that interest, fantasy, and imagination were central in generating a "learning subjective condition", which is one of the most important categories of our current proposal. More than a "proximal development zone", the "learning subjective condition" is the subjective configuration of the student within a dialogic context, which allows an intrinsic and primary integration of the student's emotions, imagination and new psychological states. This subjective configuration within a dialogic context, acts as the ground for intellectual operations, without which the student's intellect is at risk of becoming an operational–formal system that is unproductive, and centred only on cognition.

## 8.4.2   The Development of Kevin's Intellectual Operations

The possibility of meeting Kevin often outside of the school's social context allowed the researcher to participate in, and investigate other relational spaces familiar to Kevin. While visiting Kevin's house, it was possible to appreciate the complexity and diversity of elements involved in Kevin's subjective dynamics, which influenced the way in which Kevin defined the world around him and himself, as well as his learning process. In this way, the researcher was able to track down Kevin's school learning difficulties and identify new sources of emotions that undoubtedly were organised within the different feelings and emotional states that emerged within the child's social life.

Currently, the meetings are taking place on a weekly basis during the morning period, taking into consideration that Kevin now attends school in the afternoons. However, in most of the sessions Kevin is still sleeping when the researcher arrives, or has just woken up. Upon questioning Kevin's sleeping habits, his mother said, quite embarrassed, that Kevin sleeps very late as he likes to stay up watching television. At this moment Kevin's older sister shouts from inside one of the rooms, that he usually goes to bed around midnight and that nobody is able to put him in bed before that time.

This scenario, unknown to the school staff, reveals itself as an indicator of the way in which Kevin's routine is organised, as well as the nature of his family dynamics. The researcher questions the intellectual deficit diagnosis attributed to Kevin, considering the possibility of the inexistence of such a pathology. Other indicators, as for example, Kevin's health, might corroborate this hypothesis.

In one of their first meetings, while Kevin was trying to complete a Portuguese language exercise with the researcher, she realised that Kevin was lacking concentration and seemed sleepy, yawning constantly. He expressed tiredness and discomfort with how he was feeling at that moment: "Uncle, my eyes are itching. I try not to feel sleepy but I can't".

Kevin's routine significantly influences his learning process. However, his mother is not capable of assuming a firm position regarding Kevin's sleeping habits and thus he does not have the rest that would be recommended for his age. In order to understand more of Kevin's family dynamics, and the way in which it influences his learning process, the researcher proposed a conversation about Kevin's development with his mother. The possibility of discussing Kevin's development and learning process with his mother becomes a fundamental moment for the comprehension of the social context within which the child's learning capacity is being determined. She takes the opportunity to reveal and discuss important information about Kevin's development and routine.

Kevin's mother describes to the researcher how she and her daughter used to treat him as a baby while he was at home: with excessive mime, care and overprotection. As it was mentioned before, during the day Kevin is mostly at home, deprived from social contact and from the sensorial stimulation of natural weather. These overprotective habits started during Kevin's first year of childhood, when afraid that he might hurt himself, Kevin's mother would keep him in the cradle or in his stroller most of the time. This considerably delayed Kevin's development, consequently leading to psychomotor issues.

## 8.5   Discussion and Conclusion

In the two examples given in this chapter it is evident that a medical model privileges behaviour and silences the child's feelings and social context, and, as we saw in the case of Kevin, potentially, positions children as school failures. We also saw how a focus on behaviour in the case of Andrew meant that his Mother felt anxious because

of the fear of him being medicated as a solution to her son's lack of focus at school. In this case example, movement around the house was a normal everyday practice, whilst sitting still for long periods, as is prevalent in many schools, was not part of Andrew's family practice. In both cases the family conditions were not being considered in the assessment of each child's school performance. The importance of a more holistic methodology for capturing the living conditions of both Kevin and Andrew would have resulted in different assessments being made of their perceived learning difficulties at school. We also suggest that as found by Fisher (2011), that "children's understanding arise both from the practice of the particular institution and their interpretation of this" and therefore "to understand reasons for underachievement we need to focus on the child's activity within the institution rather than on institutional practice" (pp. 61–62) per se. But activity alone is not enough.

Emotions in learning was also central in the case studies. The affective dynamic with teachers, families and peers is the first step in advancing a learning process for children with perceived learning difficulties. The creation of "learning subjective conditions" is essential and must be introduced as an initial first step when working with children with perceived learning difficulties. It is also a key for understanding the dynamic and changing relationships that were observed between the researcher and Kevin, and between the mother and Andrew, because the school positioned Andrew as a behaviour problem, and this discourse significantly influenced his relationship with his mother.

The discussion of both case studies showed how Vygotsky's emphasis on *perezhivanie* in his thesis on the Psychology of Art, where he emphasised the inseparable relation between emotion and imagination, does in fact represent a new path for psychology and education, which up until now has not been well understood. This means that any psychological function or process must be conceptualised to include emotions. Here the potential for imagination would appear to be an important part of the process. The present discussion has foregrounded the relevance of imagination as a resource for the Kevin's cognitive development. But this can also be used to explain how Andrew was positioned as a behavioural problem in the school, not just by the teachers, but also by his fellow peers. When considering Andrew's case, the children and teachers had in mind an image of Andrew, initially as moving about and not focusing, to an image of him as a behaviour problem needing remediation to sit still by being placed in a special spot during whole group time.

A methodology that separates out the child from the experiences of schooling and lived experiences of being at home engaged in everyday life, can never fully allow for a holistic analysis of how a child develops a subjective sense of each situation, or even how a child subjectively configures and reconfigures the ongoing affective, social and material experiences of learning in school. Burman (2008) explains this particular problem, "The only available explanation to account for pupil failure or underachievement is therefore in terms of individuals or cultural deficit—blaming the child or the family" (p. 267). What we saw was how the medical model *othered* the children in the case studies and blamed school failure on the children themselves.

A holistic conception of the children's learning and development could not be illuminated though a traditional medical model which privileged individual behaviour in relation to cognitive outcomes. Learning was devoid of context or human feelings and emotions. Through discussing the pedagogical situation as realised through the naming by the teachers of the behavioural and cognitive deficiencies of both children, it was possible to see the methodological problems of researching in the early years of school where deeper insights into perceived learning difficulties are needed. A more dynamic process of learning and development should be captured in both the data generation and the analysis. Vygotsky (1997) discussed this dynamic nature of research as capturing development in motion.

Our elaborated case studies as presented in this chapter, sought to show a dynamic relation between all the participating people in the lives of Kevin and Andrew, including the researcher–child relationship, as was illustrated through the case example of Kevin, and the mother–child relationship as shown in the case of Andrew. The former is particularly controversial in traditional approaches to research, as the dynamics between the researcher and the child would not be traditionally captured in the data set. Yet this dynamic relation that draws upon dialectical logic was central for determining a holistic view of Kevin's development, and for realising important affective and cognitive dimensions of the learning process.

Only a few have conceptualised research in the early years using dialectical logic (Hedegaard 2008a), in relation to the genesis of development (e.g. Veresov 2014), as a dynamic process of development in motion (see Fleer and Ridgway 2014), as a past–present dialectic (see Ridgway 2014) or as occurring across countries (Gillen et al. 2007). Some of this work has captured the dynamics through digital video data gathering (Bird et al. 2014; Fleer 2008; Fleer and Ridgway 2014).

Even fewer have considered the affective dimensions when undertaking research (see Quiñones 2014; Quiñones and Fleer 2011) or the central role of the research as part of the research context (González Rey 1997, 2005; Hedegaard 2008b) as was noted particularly in the second case study presented in this chapter. Bringing to a research methodology the concepts of perezhivanie (Sect. 8.1), emotion, imagination and communication (and concepts discussed in Sect. 8.3—subjective sense, and subjective configuration) gives new insights into the nature of the lived experience of children in the early years of school during the process of learning and development. These concepts have supported the process of capturing data that is dynamic and holistic, revealing the affective contexts of both case studies.

What is central here for advancing a cultural–historical methodology, is keeping in unity the affective and cognitive dimensions as understood in the context of shared social practices and lived material conditions and experiences, as we saw in the movement at home for Case Study 1, and the sleeping routines in Case Study 2. We argue that these social processes are always realised as a subjective production, rather than as a simple reflection of reality. The concepts of perezhivanie, emotion, imagination and communication, subjective sense, and subjective configuration (see Sect. 8.3) together supported this analysis and showed how the pathologising of the learning situation resulted in deficit positioning of each child.

We see as important the methodological principle of overcoming what emerged in the case studies of positioning subjectivity as an individual phenomenon. Rather we view subjectivity as something that is socially produced, and given meaning during the process of interaction. Further, we argue that these social processes are always realised as a subjective production, rather than as a simple reflection of reality.

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