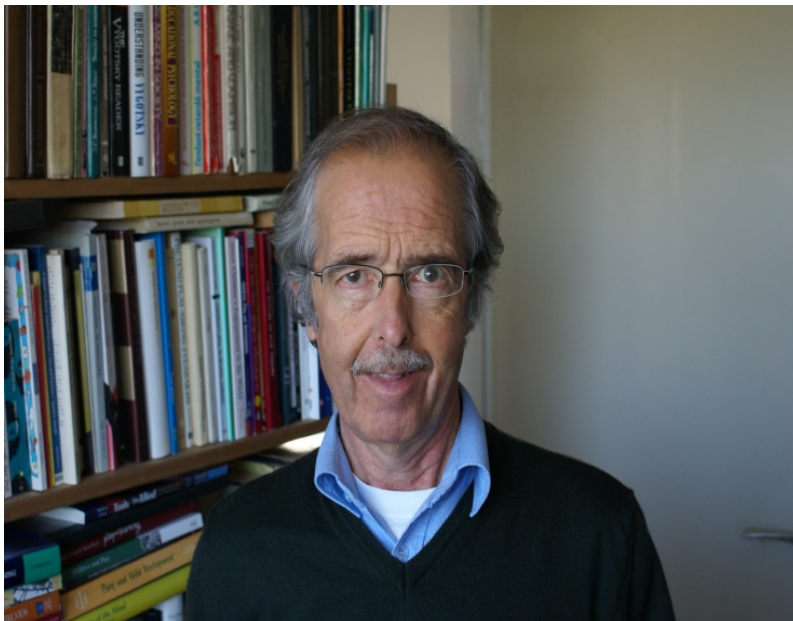


## Bert van Oers



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Since 1975, I became involved in the Dutch community of scholars who are inspired by Cultural-Historical Theory. Initially I assisted in school-based research which tried to apply the possibilities of the Cultural-Historical Theory, mainly following the ideas of Vygotskij, Leont'ev and Gal'perin. Our main ambitions were to develop Cultural-Historical Theory at the conceptual level, implement this approach in school practices by supporting teachers' professional thinking, and additionally strengthen the approach with the help of empirical research. In the course of these developments the work of Leont'ev became a stronger dimension in the perspective, and we followed international trend called Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT).

Nowadays, this community in the Netherlands includes academics, teachers, teacher trainers who collaborate in a nation-wide project on the innovation of schools from this CHAT perspective. I am one of the founders (in the 1980s) of this educational concept in the

Netherlands, called **Developmental Education**. Together with teachers, teacher trainers, and different academic researchers, we expanded this educational concept over the whole country, now (2025) including about 500 schools.

My personal research program focusses on promoting *meaningful learning* in elementary classrooms and especially studies the contexts in which this meaningful learning could be roused. Main findings that were empirically tested and implemented in school practices were the idea that *socio-cultural practices* must be taken as powerful contexts for learning and for finding Zones of Proximal Learning that make sense for both pupils and teachers. Moreover, the sense of learning appeared to depend on the way the cultural practices (“Activities”) were organized. In particular **play** was found (conceptually and practically) to be a powerful context for (collaborative) learning through all ages. Most of my research is focused on the elaboration (in theory and practice) of play, in collaboration with teachers and teacher trainers. In the future, I will continue to write about play and learning in all stages of human cultural development. My recent publication (in Dutch) was based on a Vygotskij/Bachtin approach and resulted in a book called “Ik is een meervoud” (I is a plural). This book includes different essays that argue for a polyphonic human being who always takes along a cultural heritage through the appropriation of different voices during one’s personal biography, beginning from birth throughout life.

Some of my publications (in English) are for example:

#### BOOKS:

Fleer, M. & van Oers, B. (Eds.).(2017). *International Handbook on Early Childhood education*.

Two Volumes. Dordrecht: Springer.

van Oers, B. (2012) (Ed.). *Developmental Education for young children. Concept, Practice, and Implementation*. International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and

Development 7. Dordrecht: Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1007/978-94-007-4617-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4617-6) 8

#### ARTICLES:

van Oers, B. (2024). A play-based curriculum for emancipation and cultural competence. In:

Bøttcher, L. & Charlotte Mathiasse, Ch. (Eds.), *Dialectic Special Pedagogy: Supporting children, young people and adults in the transition of becoming competent social participants*. London: Bloomsbury.

- van Oers, B. (2022). Social representations of play: Vygotskij, Piaget and beyond. In I. Pramling-Samuelsson & N. Veraksa (Eds.), *Piaget and Vygotsky in the XXI Century: Possible dialogues in education* (pp. 65 – 85). Berlin: Springer.
- van Oers, B. & Pompert, B. (2021). Assisting teachers for curriculum innovation. An international comparative study. *New Ideas in Child and Educational Psychology*, 1(1), 43–76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11621/nicep.2021.0303>.
- van Oers, B. (2020). The zone of proximal development (Vygotskij). Entry for *The SAGE Encyclopedia of children and childhood studies*, pp. 1739 - 1740. (Ed. D. Cook). London: Sage Publisher.
- van Oers, B. (2019). The Double Move in Meaningful Teaching Revisited. In: Edwards, A., Fler, M., & Bøttcher, L. (eds), *Cultural-Historical Approaches to Studying Learning and Development. Societal, Institutional and personal perspectives* (pp. 119 – 134). Singapore: Springer Nature.
- [for more titles, see website [www.bertvanoers.nl](http://www.bertvanoers.nl) ].