

Discursive Psychology and Social Technology: Investigating Web 2.0 in Education

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Rethink the way you learn
Choose Open Learning

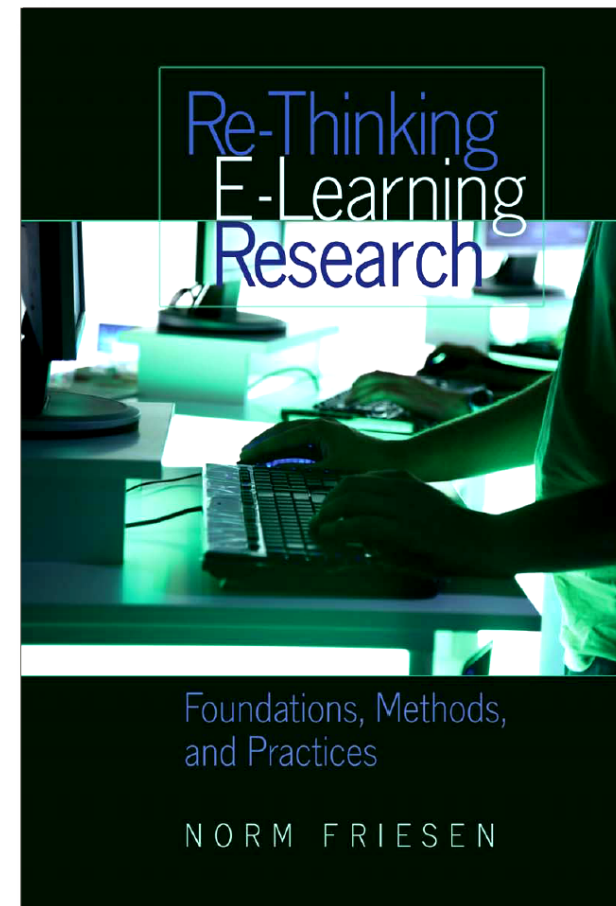
Thompson Rivers University Open Learning

- 16,000 students a year
- 52 degree, diploma and certificate programs
- 400+ courses offered



Research

- Describes and demonstrates use of qualitative research methods in use of blogs, discussion, chatbots, manipulables
- From Peter Lang, Spring 2009



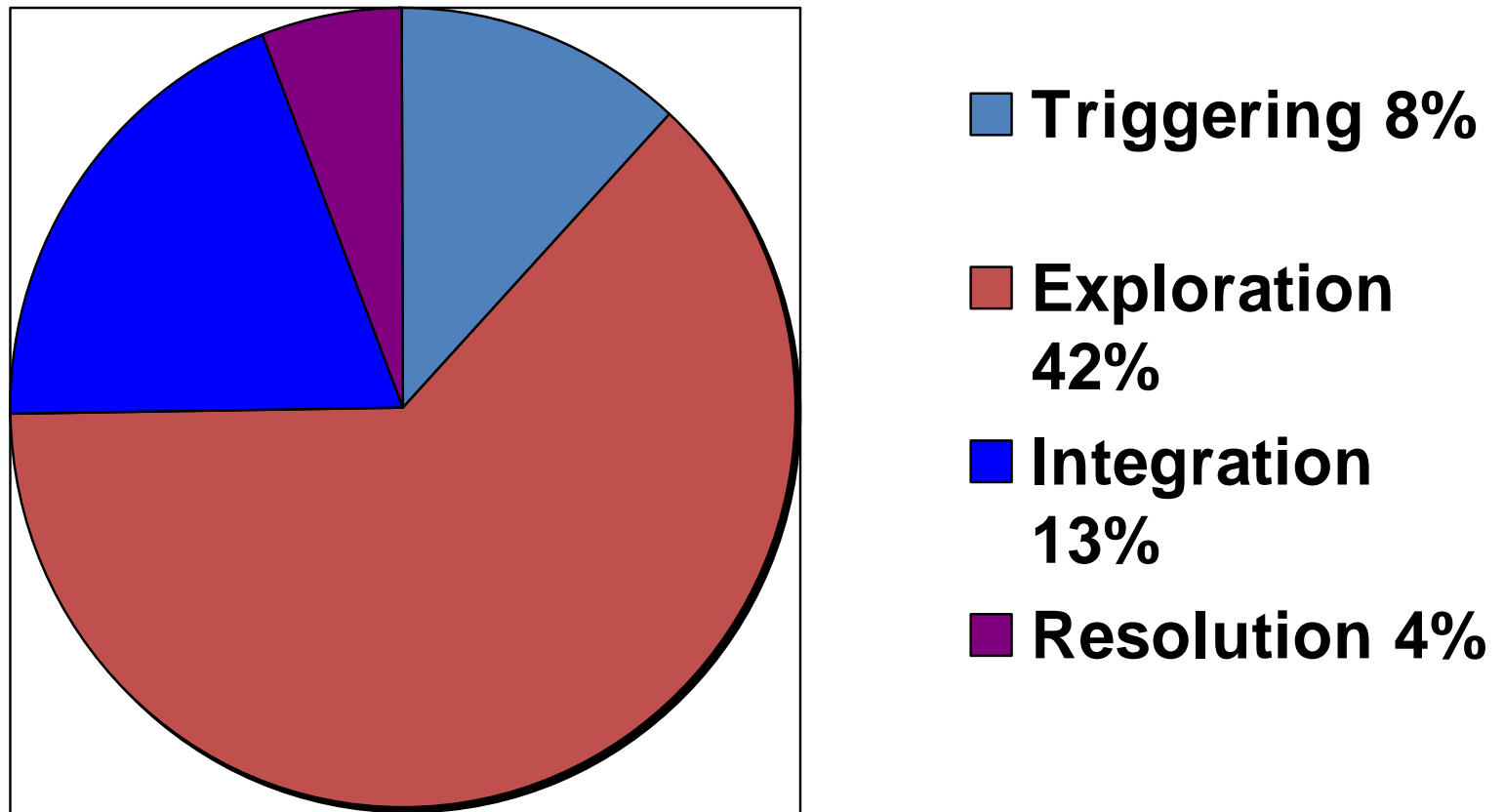
Scholarship of Teaching Technologies

<http://scott.tru.ca>



Study of 24 messages; 1 week

But the majority of student messages are “exploratory” or “social” rather than “critical,” “logical” in character (70% - 90% vs. 5% - 22%)



Outline

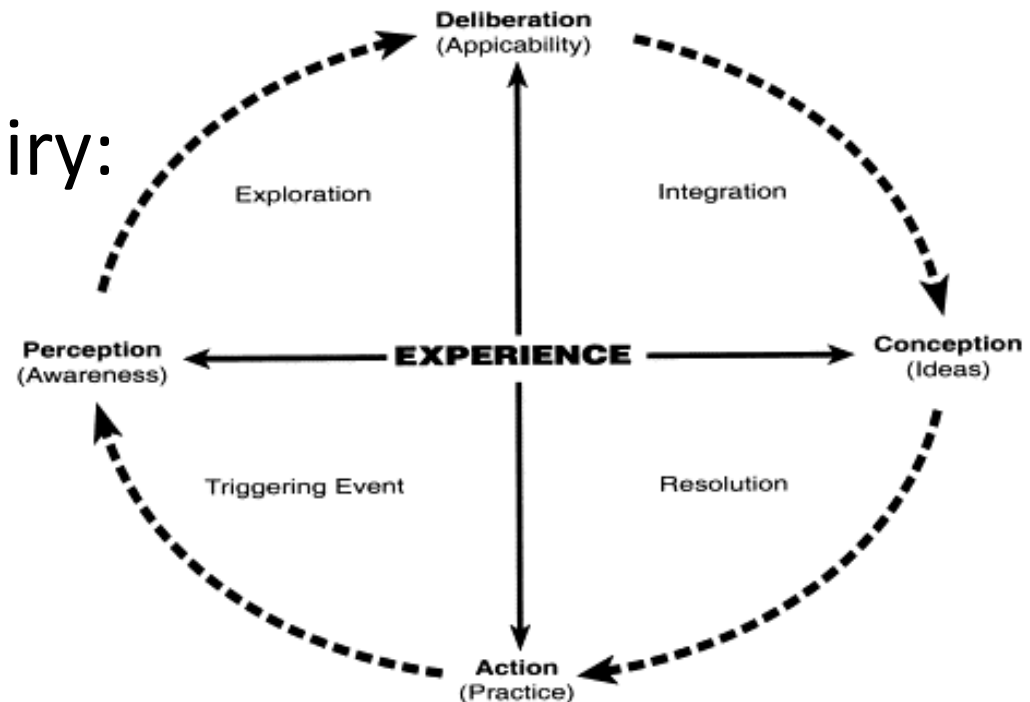
- A new approach for a new technology
- Research background/rationale
- Web 2.0 / Social Technology
- Discursive Psychology: From phoning to chatting
- Differences from conventional approaches
- Combining Web 2.0 and DP
(heuristic/example)

Research into Collaborative Learning

- Conceptualized in terms of “critical inquiry” and logical “knowledge construction” occurring in text-based, threaded discussion forums

- E.g. Practical inquiry:

- triggering event
- exploration
- Integration
- resolution



Rourke 2005; Findings

Students' activities included:

1. providing others with praise and encouragement,
2. presenting informal arguments,
3. engaging in discursive explorations
4. making connections between course topics and their personal experiences

Discourse in Web 2.0

- “Read-Write Web:” involves exchanges that are informal and *conversational*
- Sometimes (often) telegraphic, abbreviated
- Blur the boundaries of the formal and informal in education
- Conversation, not debate or knowledge formulation

Web 2.0

- Blogs (especially comments), wikis (discussion of collaborative writing/revisions), social s/w like Facebook (esp. text chat, comments)
- Question for research, theory: “How can personal and improvisatory interaction can be fruitfully understood in psychological and instructional?”

Theory Available

- Psychology is foundational for research in educational technology; three paradigms:
- Behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism
- Constructivism (as a *learning theory*) is in dispute. Competing paradigms:
 - Situativity (e.g., Greeno, 2006)
 - “eclectic,” “synergistic” approaches (e.g., Bransford et al 2006; Robinson et al 2008, p. 38)
 - Pragmatic, “ecological” approaches (Fox, 2006)

Example (from chat)

Moderator: *Welcome [your] thoughts, questions here*

Moderator: *I think co-creation of learning by students and educators together is a big one [i.e. thought, question].*

Participant 1: *...and re-think the concept of 'ownership' of knowledge [...]*

Participant 2: *Technology: affordances for communication and connection.*

Telephone Calls (click icon to play)



- *Hello, Hi, Hi! How are you?
Fine, how are you? Okay.
What's new.*
- *Hello? Hello. Hi. You were you
sitting by the phone? No, I'm
in the kitchen where I was
talking to a friend of mine
earlier; I was just putting my
fried rice on my plate to go
eat lunch.*



Telephone Calls, con't

- Jerry? Yeah. Irene. Oh hello, Irene. I just... I was just thinking about you just this moment. Uh the phone rang so long, I was worried. Oh? Uhuh. Well I just got in, oh, not 5 minutes ago from the hospital, and um the only thing I can report...
- Hello? Hello Bonnie. Hello, this is Marlene. How are you? Fine. Good. Do you have Marina's telephone number?

Telephone Calls, con't

- Hi Donnie. Guess what? What? My car is stalled!
- Hello? Are you awake? Yeah! I just got up. Oh did ya? Yes. Well good. I'm alone. Bud left me last night.
- Hello? Hello? Could you speak a little louder? Whose this? Robin. Hi, its Evelyn. Hi! I didn't recognize your voice. Oh really? Yeah. Ah, it's the same old me.

Differences/Similarities

- One undertaken for a common, educational purpose; the other taken for everyday reasons
- No paralinguistic communication or expression vs. a wide range of expressions in audible conversation (significant emphasis on capturing emphasis, tone and timing in conversation analysis)
- Both grounded in the everyday, relational practices
- Sense being constructed in both

Psychological study of this communication?

- “Discursive Psychology,” also known as “post-cognitive(ist) psychology”
- Emerged in the 1990’s
- Relies on Ethnomethodology & conversation analysis:

*everyday social sense and reality are **emergent phenomena**, actively constructed on the micro-level via everyday interaction and **conversation***

Discursive Psychology con't

- Of primary interest are not the researcher's preconceptions or categories, but those mobilized by participants
- The concern of ethnomethodology "with sense-making" has been observed to make "it a natural framework for undertaking a study of instructional practice" (Koschmann et al., 2007).
- Becomes psychological when issues like "memory" "belief" "understanding," etc. are "topicalized" or evident

Emphasis on Relational Practices

- “your situation is *this*; mine is *that*.”
- A great deal is taken for granted, is not questioned; not subject to questioning and hypothesis formulation/testing
- Conversation as a kind of “work” to deal with exceptions and to fit things into what is taken for granted
- This is the basis for social relations, and ultimately, of **all knowledge**

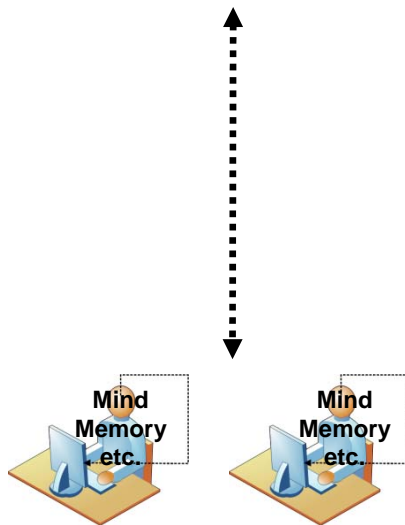
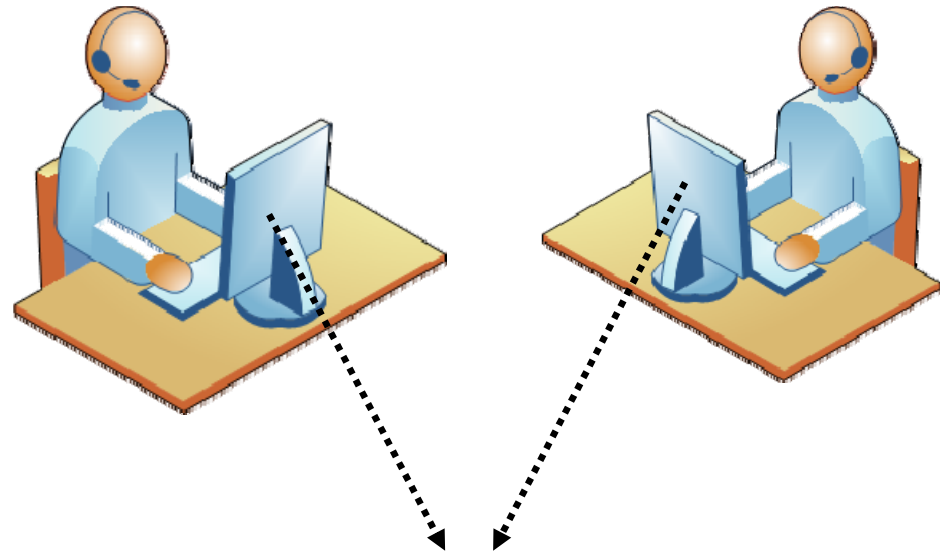
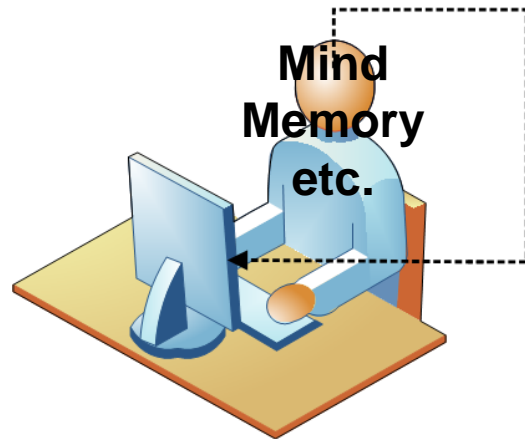
Begins with study of constructed meaning

- The study of the *methods* that people use in everyday situations to “accomplish” meaning and significance: ethnomethodology.
- the multiple methods used by people in the “contingent accomplishment of socially organized practices” (Garfinkel 1967; 33)
- E.g. Completing a recipe, writing an email message, chatting.

Focuses on the Psychological (in everyday talk)

- The focus of discursive psychology is the action orientation of talk and writing. For both participants and analysts, the primary issue is the social actions or the interactional work being done in the discourse
- Agency, intent, doubt, belief, prejudice, commitment, and so on,” as Edwards and Potter (2005) explain, “are built, made available or countered...” routinely in everyday talk-in-interaction (p. 242).

Where is the “Mind” located?



**Mind, Memory,
Understanding...
Instructability**

Moderator: I think co-creation of learning.

Participant 1: ...and re-think the...

Participant 2: Technology: affordances for....

A non-cognitive investigation of 'mental' phenomena (Lynch & Bogan 05)

- Identify "one or more of the topics associated with cognitive science by locating organized social settings in which these topics feature as perspicuous phenomena"
- Investigate "how the intelligibility of actions and expressions are bound to interactional, pragmatic ... contexts"
- Treat "assessments about what goes on in a speaker's mind as themselves part of the social interactional field of production"

Lynch, 2006

- descriptions point to an alternative universe of embodied
- practices situated in historical and cultural circumstances.
- appear very different "from any real or imagined cognitive domain"
- But still are likely to be important to effective communication and learning as many traditional cognitive topics or themes.

Example

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Possible results

- topics designate phenomena that are themselves being performed in “the social interactional field of production”
- other’s sentences are completed, co-creating order and meaning that has no single owner or progenitor (hence encouraging a rethinking of its ownership)

Possible results

- this co-creation appears as social and public rather than cognitive and mental
- it is shaped in and by the communicative affordances of the chat environment
- A significant part of this work is “relational” in nature

To be done...

- Experiment with protocols for gathering data
- Web 2.0 data interlinked in significant ways
- Propose to gather data from three courses using Web 2.0 technologies
- Develop a “Thesaurus” of words, usages and their interrelationship
- Work with data via conversation analysis

Questions?

Links:

<http://learningspaces.org/n> (my homepage)

<http://scott.tru.ca> (research centre)

<http://www.educ.uvic.ca/Faculty/mroth/>
(collaborating researcher)