

Trajectories of learning in/across contexts of learning

List of Invited Participants:

- Ingrid de Saint-Georges & Barbara Duc (University of Geneva)
- Andrew Jocuns & Reed Stevens (University of Washington)
- Kevin O'Connor (University of Rochester)
- Ben Rampton (King's College London, Centre for Language Discourse & Communication)
- Stanton Wortham (University of Pennsylvania), Joel Kuipers (George Washington University) & Gail Viechnicki (George Washington University)

- Discussant: Jay Lemke (University of Michigan)

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Education, Identity, Trajectories of learning, Ethnography of Communication

Panel Topic: This year's conference theme invites us to reflect upon the interplay between language and society by considering the micro and macro connections existing between discourse practices and the social world. In the field of education, sociologists, critical theorists, sociolinguists and others have long shown that educational contexts are crucial sites for studying the production and reproduction of social orders, and for examining the role played by language in that process in promoting (or denying) certain identities or cultural practices over others. Given that context, this panel would like to explore the mutually reinforcing connections between the local use of talk in educational contexts and institutional, social, and cultural processes extending beyond the level of these local interactions. It proposes to do so from a specific vantage point, namely by exploring "trajectories of learning". That is, participants will collectively reflect about learning as a process that unfolds through time and space, and that involves participation in a series of tasks, happening in complex material and social environments and supported by multiple kinds of interactions and which come to form over time the learning experience.

Examining trajectories of learning, participants in the panel will address the conference's theme by linking two perspectives:

- (a) A "bottom-up" approach, by asking, for example, what is the contribution of specific verbal and non-verbal practices to displaying, shaping, organizing learning, development, social identities and social orders and by asking whether these contributions change or evolve over time and across sites?
- (b) A "top-down" approach, by asking, for example, how cultural values, disciplinary knowledge, institutional structures, curricular programs traverse, mediate or shape, at the interactional level, the situated experience of learners in the course of their trajectory of learning?

At the micro interactional perspective, participants in the panel will offer analyses that illustrate how a variety of processes are shaped in real-time in the course of trajectories of learning. They will explore processes linked to identity construction (Wortham, & al, O'Connor), social class membership (Rampton) and knowledge development (Jocuns & Stevens, de Saint-Georges & Duc). At the macro-level, the papers will explore how these micro level interactions

have an effect upon, or entail, aspects of larger-scales processes, such as the organization of scientific discourse and occupational identity (O'Connor, Jocuns & Stevens, de Saint-Georges & Duc), sensibility to social class (Rampton) or the construction of the science classroom (Wortham et al.)

By using the notion of “trajectory of learning” as a heuristic concept, this panel will explore how identities, knowledge, and social practices are configured, or reconfigured, dynamically over time and identify the specific roles played by language in this process at both a micro and/or macro level.

Discussion questions:

If the aim of education is, on some level, to re-organize knowledge, identities, cultural values or possibilities for actions for the learners, we would like to ask, for the purposes of discussion:

- What are the views promoted and projected in the way trajectories get organized?
- How are identities, knowledge, cultural values, actions, etc. transformed in the course of the trajectories?

This also requires addressing more theoretical/methodological issues:

- How can trajectories be identified and described?
- What conceptual and methodological tools do we need for thinking in terms of trajectories?
- How useful is the concept of trajectories for addressing the micro/macro connection?
- What does this level of analysis allow us to see with regards to learning and education? What does it blind us to?

Panel Organization:

- 5' brief presentation of the panel by panel organizers
- 5 paper presentations (25' presentation, including a 5' discussion of individual papers)
- 20' commenting of the papers by the discussant
- 30' general discussion, moderated by the discussant, and including audience members and panel members.

References

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