Many Voices, Many Selves: An Analysis Of Education Blog Discourses

Kelli Lynn Finney

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MANY VOICES, MANY SELVES:
AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION BLOG DISCOURSES

by

Kelli Lynn Finney
Bachelor of Arts, Seattle Pacific University, 2007

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
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for the degree of
Master of Arts

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This thesis, submitted by Kelli Lynn Finney in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Dr. Wayne Swisher
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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Date
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Title       Many Voices, Many Selves: An Analysis of Education Blog Discourses
Department  Linguistics
Degree      Master of Arts

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Name: Kelli Lynn Finney
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<table>
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<td>Weblog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blogger</td>
<td>Weblogger</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Communicative Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Communication</td>
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<td>CMCMC</td>
<td>Convergent Media Computer Mediated Communication</td>
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<td>CMCMD</td>
<td>Convergent Media Computer Mediated Discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMD</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Discourse</td>
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<td>CMDA</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>DMC</td>
<td>Digitally Mediated Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMC</td>
<td>Electronically Mediated Communication</td>
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<td>F2F</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTML</td>
<td>Hypertext Markup Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Instant Message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMC</td>
<td>Internet Mediated Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Internet Relay Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC</td>
<td>Keyboard-to-Screen Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMDA</td>
<td>Multimodal Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMORPG</td>
<td>Massively Multi-player Online Role Playing Game</td>
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<td>RSS</td>
<td>Real Simple Syndication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>Short Message Service</td>
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<td>SNS</td>
<td>Social Networking Site</td>
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ABSTRACT

At this point, the majority of computer mediated communication (CMC) studies have employed a variation analysis approach, quantitatively describing language on the Internet and comparing CMC to speech and writing. While these studies have provided valuable information about CMC, they have also left many gaps, especially related to social and ideological issues such as language use.

This study responds to the need for more qualitative studies of language on the Internet by examining one form of CMC: education blogs. The study analyzes a selection of posts from five blogs published between March 21, 2012 and March 28, 2013. These five blogs were chosen from an initial list of 307 blogs that was compiled from both education blog reference lists and snowball sampling from blogrolls. Ideological discourse features of the blogs, specifically James Paul Gee’s concepts of situated meaning, intertextuality, social languages, and Big “D” Discourses, are the focus of the study.

Following this analysis, several recent social media tools are discussed, focusing on the implications these technologies have for literacy practices. Questions exploring how Discourse use might be impacted by these new types of social media are also introduced, as are numerous possibilities for future research.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Much can be learned about people not only by what they say but by how they say it. Each time a person engages in a speech act, he or she makes numerous choices including the language to use, the variety and register of that language, and the gestures and facial expressions to use while speaking. Written communication, while sometimes deemed less robust than spoken or signed languages due to the lack of many of the nonverbal cues present in face to face (F2F) communication, nevertheless evidences a complex system of signs and symbols (Gee 2005: 10)

1.1 Discussion Organization

The remainder of this chapter presents preliminary information about the study, including research questions, study motivation, terminological choices and definitions, and a brief overview of the relevant aspects of the sociolinguistic situation of computer mediated communication (CMC). Chapter 2, Blogs and Blogospheres, and Chapter 3, Theoretical Background, provide background information: Chapter 2 about blogs and Chapter 3 about theories consulted for the analysis. The methodology used for blog selection and data analysis is presented in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 presents the study results and discusses study findings. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the implications of
these results for trends in literacy and society and provides closing thoughts and suggestions for further research.

1.2 Study Overview and Rationale

Writers make up for the nonverbal cues present in spoken language in a variety of ways, including using different styles of discourse. The present study aims to examine one type of written language—blogs—in order to see how discourse styles (and Discourse styles) are used. §3.1.3 and §3.3.1 will provide more information about how the term “discourse” is used in this paper. For now, discourse can be thought of as “how language is used in certain contexts” (Rapley 2007: 2). “Discourse” written with a capital “D” refers not just to language, but to “say[ing] or [writ]ing the right things in the right way while playing the right social role and (appearing) to hold the right values, beliefs and attitudes” (Gee 1990: 142).

In addition to the concept of discourse in the traditional sense, the idea of Discourse (Big “D” Discourse) proposed by James Gee will also be examined. Basically, Gee’s conception of Discourse refers not just to the style of language used, but to the style of “language plus ‘other stuff’” (Gee 2005: 26) [italics in original]. Gee proposes this idea because,

making visible and recognizable who we are and what we are doing always involves a great deal more than ‘just language.’ It involves acting-interacting-thinking-valuing-talking (sometimes writing-reading) in the ‘appropriate’ way with the ‘appropriate’ props at the ‘appropriate’ times in the ‘appropriate’ places. (2005: 26) [Italics in original]

Three main questions will guide this study of blog discourses (and Discourses); these are presented in the list immediately following.
1. For what purposes are Discourses used in blogs?

2. How does change in Discourse choice and use over a year’s worth of blog posts reflect changes in social media and social media practices?

3. How does change in Discourse use reflect social changes, especially those related to literacy?

By exploring these questions, the study aims to both provide a description of how bloggers employ Discourses in their work and to examine the relationship among change in social media, accompanying social media practices, and Discourse use.

This study is an analysis of the blog posts of five different bloggers, all of whom work or have worked in an education-related profession. Each of the selected blogs is publicly available; neither registering for an account nor signing in to the hosting service is required. The study is diachronic in nature, covering one year’s worth of blog posts from the period of March 21, 2012 to March 27, 2013. The posts are considered both as individual communicative acts in their own right and, examined together, as corpora representative of each author’s work.

Many researchers have conducted blog analyses prior to this study; however, none, to the author’s knowledge, have examined the genre of education blogs. The majority of blog studies have analyzed personal blogs, such as Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright’s (2004) content analysis study of a random sample of 457 blogs; Gill, Gergle, French & Oberlander’s (2008) study of emotion perception in blog posts, and Vaisman’s (2011) study of teenagers’ typographically-evidenced language play on Hebrew-language blogs.

__________________________

1 Registration and account creation and sign-in were not required for the selected blogs and hosting services at the time of writing.
Furthermore, many studies of different types of CMC are variation analysis studies. For example, see Herring & Paolillo’s (2006) study of genre variation in blogs, Siebenhaar’s (2006) study of code-switching in Swiss-German Internet relay chat (IRC) rooms and van Compernolle’s (see Compernolle 2008) study of second-person pronoun use and address strategies in personal ads in Quebec. Each of these studies focuses on a certain type of grammatical variation. A limited number of studies focus on grammatical variation that is specific to writing; two such studies are Paolillo’s (2001) study of language variation in IRC, which follows a social network approach (see §5.2.3; Granovetter 1973), and Squires’s (2011) study of sociolinguistic variation in instant messaging.\(^2\)

These studies are generally quantitative in nature, and are thus termed “counting and coding” studies by Herring (2004a). While useful, these studies present only a partial description of selected features and cannot fully account for important aspects of CMC, such as its interactive nature, evidenced in such blog features as comments and hyperlinks (Herring et al. 2004, Mishne and Glance 2006). In addition, Jannis Androutsopoulos (2011), a professor of German and media linguistics at the University of Hamburg, argues in his chapter in Thurlow and Mroczek’s (2011) volume that variation analyses cannot deal fully with the multimodal and participatory nature of CMC, which characterizes the Web 2.0 environment. Androutsopoulos (2011: 279-280) gives five main “limits” of a language variation approach, which are listed below:

- Unimodal focus
- Monolinguistic focus
- Reliance on linguistic variable (e.g. excluding such items as emoticons and script choice)

\(^2\) These studies, in addition to others, were all cited in Androutsopoulos (2011).
• Predefined independent variables (e.g. social variables like age and gender)
• Quantification

Thus, rather than relying only on variation analysis studies or quantitative studies, Androutsopoulos and others, such as Paccagnella (1997), suggest that qualitative studies like ethnographies and case studies can provide a more thorough analysis of CMC. Hine’s (2008) work discusses why ethnographic methods are useful in studying online communities. She proposes that conducting a new form of ethnography, a virtual ethnography, is necessary in order to more fully examine the features of an online community.

Numerous ethnographic studies have been conducted, such as Wellman & Hampton’s (1999) study of online and offline interactions in a Toronto suburb, Lysloff’s (2003) study of musical communities online, and Walstrom’s (2000) study of support groups for individuals with eating disorders. As Androutsopoulos (2011) notes, the goal of conducting further qualitative studies is to help remedy some of the ‘blind spots’ of variation analyses, such as the five limits listed previously in this section (2011: 279-280).

In response to this need for more qualitative research, the present study is based on Androutsopoulos’s (2011) premise that variation analysis studies “have... contributed to a differentiated and deexoticized understanding of new media discourse” (2011: 278) and that the ideological uses of language and communication within new media should thus be the new focus of research.

Thus, while the present study necessarily involves some “counting and coding” (Herring 2004a) to provide basic information about the chosen blogs, the focus is on the presence of varied styles of language used throughout each blog and blog post and the functions and purposes of these styles. The study follows the style of analysis described in Thurlow (2006) favoring:
A more interpretative, critical approach that highlights striking themes rather than statistical patterns. As is true of much qualitative analysis, any interpretations therefore make few direct claims to representativeness but instead appeal to an informed judgment of typicality, supported by the inclusion of multiple examples selected from a wide range of data sources...the objective is to examine the broad semantic and evaluative fields that are established linguistically and to identify those recurrent narrative resources 'threaded' throughout the corpus...In this way, these...texts are seen to draw on and privilege particular points of view and particular orders of discourse. (2006: 671-672)

While variation analysis tends to associate discrete stylistic features with particular forms of CMC, often based on modality or synchronicity (Herring 2007), it is assumed that a mix of styles will be typical for blogs, due in part to the “push button publishing” nature of most blogs (Honan 2013). That is, since the majority of blogs are now published using services which allow a blogger to publish a post by simply clicking a text box, typing, and clicking a button to add the post to his or her blog, quick writing and posting are encouraged (Blood 2000). Thus, it is also likely that there will be less editing of blog posts, resulting in the frequent occurrence of different Discourses.

However, using multiple styles of writing or speaking was common long before blogging began. For example, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981[1975]), a literary critic and semiotician, discusses the very process of writing itself as combining existing “speech genres” (e.g. writing styles) or statements to create new texts. He terms this process *heteroglossia*. The concept of heteroglossia will be discussed further in §3.2.
1.3 Language Meets Internet

1.3.1 Choosing terminology

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of studying blog writing, or indeed any language used in new media, is deciding on the terms to use when discussing that language. This section aims to both clarify the terminology used in the present study and to explain the motivation behind the terminological choices. The selected terms will first be discussed in the body of the section; Table 1 at the end of the section will summarize the terms and their definitions.

Comparatively straightforward, and thus requiring only a brief note, is the term Web 2.0. Tim O'Reilly, a web entrepreneur, first used this term at a 2004 conference. O'Reilly saw many new Internet phenomena as evidence of a move toward creative and participatory uses of the Web (Herring 2013). While some are critical of the term’s meaningfulness, it has nevertheless been accepted as shorthand for referring to the Web as of 2004. O'Reilly and others differentiated Web 2.0 from the early Web by citing and delivering rich user experiences” (O'Reilly 2005).

However, choosing other terms proves to be more complex. For example, one of the first questions that arises when choosing terminology is:

Which term is appropriate to refer to the various forms of communication which are a) primarily graphically realized, b) either in a one-to-one, a one-to-many, or a many-to-many format and c) mediated by cell phones, smart phones, or networked...tablets or computers?

(Jucker & Dürscheid 2012: n.p.)

Many similar terms have been proposed to describe language on the Internet, all with different nuances of meaning: netspeak, electronically mediated communication (EMC), netlingo, e-language, tech-speak, and e-talk (in Thurlow 2001) digitally
mediated communication (DMC) (Crystal 2011), Internet-based communication (Beißwenger 2007 cited in Jucker & Dürscheid 2012), and Internet-mediated communication (IMC) (Yus 2011) are only a sampling of these terms. Other researchers, emphasizing that communication does not always take place via a computer, but generally involves a keyboard, have proposed the term keyboard to screen communication (KSC) (Jucker & Dürscheid 2012). However, this term does not reflect the participatory nature of communication on the Internet, nor does it emphasize that participants are interacting with one another, a key feature of communicative acts on the Internet.

One of the most popular terms is computer mediated communication (CMC), used, for example, by Herring (2004b), as well as in the title of a journal on the topic, Journal of Computer Mediated Communication (the first issue was published in 1995), and in much early research such as that done by Baron (1984). CMC is often the preferred term, likely due to its apt description of the activity that is taking place via a computer or other device and also its neutral connotations (compared to, for example, e-lingo and netspeak). However, CMC generally presupposes a form of communication that is writing (text) based, as evidenced by Herring’s definition of the term as, “predominantly text-based human-human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony [i.e. through text messages]” (2007: 1).

In an attempt to remedy this, some have proposed definitions that seek to better account for the multimodal nature of CMC. For example, Kress (2012) has proposed the term multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA). In Kress’s view, MMDA “encompass [es] all of the modes used in any text or text-like entity (2012: 38) [italics in original]. “Text” in this case refers to the set of all the signs and symbols that are “woven together” (Kress 2012: 36). MMDA does not view language as central to communicating the meaning of the whole, rather it, “entails that all modes in a multimodal ensemble are treated as contributing to the meaning of that ensemble; language is always a partial
bearer of the meaning of a textual/semiotic whole” (Kress 2012: 38) [italics in original]. For example, think of the photographs that Dorothea Lange, John Vachon, and others used to document migrant farmers traveling to the Western United States out of the drought-stricken Midwestern states (WETA 2012). While the photos are captioned, these captions are not the primary way of communicating meaning: the juxtaposition of elements in the photograph, the lighting, and the facial expressions of individuals all aid in this process.³

While MMDA does account for the unique nature of communication on the Internet, viewing video, pictures and audio as separate meaning-making modes that are combined to form a “coherent text”, it does not always accurately reflect the nature of CMC communicative acts. For example, Kress’s view that “textual threads are many and…materially diverse… [and]…can be drawn into one textual/semiotic whole” (2012: 36) presupposes purposeful choice in selecting different modes in order to best express a particular meaning. He views “choice and…design [as] central issues”. If numerous ways to communicate the same message are available, he proposes that one faces questions such as, “which mode is best, most apt, for the content/meaning I wish to communicate? Which mode most appeals to the audience whom I intend to address?...how am I positioning myself if I choose...this mode rather than those others?” (Kress 2003b, section titled “Design as choice in context”).

While this is certainly true in some cases, in others it seems that creators choose items such as video and audio out of personal preference more than anything else (i.e. the podcasts on the blog Hack Education cover the same topics about which the author

³ See especially John Vachon’s photograph Migrant man looking up at billboard and Dorothea Lange’s famous “Migrant Mother”: Woman with children in a tent. California, 1936. Both are available from http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/dustbowl/photos/
has previously blogged). Rather than as distinct modes, then, it often seems that bloggers view the different options more as mediums, much like choosing between painting the same scene in oil versus acrylic paint. This conception of the term is based on the definition of medium as “the intervening substance through which impressions are conveyed to the senses…” (Oxford Dictionary 2013). Thus, for the present study, these different options for communication will be treated as different mediums at the author's disposal, any of which could be used successfully to convey the same message. The term “mode” will be used to refer to a “particular way of doing something” that is “appropriate for a particular situation or person” (MacMillan Dictionary 2013). Nonetheless, Kress’s (2012) theory is of note as it evidences a change from viewing the multiplicity of mediums in CMC as being unusual or novel to viewing them as characteristic of Web 2.0 communication.

Herring (2013) has also reached a similar conclusion, revising her terms CMC and “computer mediated discourse” (CMD) to “convergent media computer mediated communication” (CMC:CMC) and “convergent media computer mediated discourse” (CMC:CMD). Like Kress’s MMDA, these terms more accurately reflect the overlapping nature of communicative acts on the Internet. Communicative acts are not limited to writing, but combine other mediums with writing, including pictures, videos, and audio recordings. Due to this recognition that various media are used in communicative acts, and the fact that Herring’s (2013) terms, unlike Kress’s, do not mandate purposeful medium choice, CMC:CMC and CMC:CMD will be used for the present discussion, despite the terms being rather cumbersome.

In addition to choosing the most accurate term to describe Web 2.0 communication, it is also necessary to examine some common terms that have become rather unclear when considered in the context of CMC:CMC, namely “text” and “utterance”. While the separation between these terms has generally been far from clear, attempting to apply either of these to CMC:CMC only complicates the situation.
Although “text” as it is generally used in linguistics refers to “a sequence of paragraphs that represents an extended unit of speech” (Loos, Anderson, Day Jr., Jordan & Wingate 1998), in the context of CMC it is sometimes also used to refer to a coherent communicatory whole, as described by Kress (2012). However, text is not the most preferable term to use in discussing CMC due to its strong ties to writing. Likewise, “utterance” has strong ties to speech (Loos et al. 2004). Using text or utterance to describe CMC can thus unintentionally connect Internet language to either speech or writing (see, e.g., Baron 1998 and 2000; Crystal 2001; Tagliamonte & Denis 2008; Yates 1996).

In addition to terminological complications, Web 2.0 communication has also moved from “medium-specific channels” of communication (i.e. communication technologies generally restricted to one medium, such as email) to multimedia channels of communication (such as a social networking site, or SNS), where “content…flows across multiple media channels” (Jenkins 2006: 243). Thus, following Jucker & Dürscheid (2012) the term “communicative act” (CA) will be used instead of either text or utterance. This term is preferable as it is more general (Jucker & Dürscheid 2012), avoids attempts to classify language on the Internet as being more like speech or more like writing, and emphasizes both the participatory and multimedia nature of Web 2.0.

Table 1 summarizes the key terms that will be used throughout the following discussion and provides definitions of each term. References to relevant scholars are also given.
### Table 1. Key Terms and Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Act (CA)</td>
<td>Any act that directly seeks to communicate (Jucker &amp; Dürscheid 2012; Sperber &amp; Wilson 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)</td>
<td>Primarily writing-based person-to-person interaction moderated by networked computers (Herring 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Mediated Discourse (CMD)</td>
<td>The communication produced when individuals interact with one another via networked computer-transmitted messages (Herring 2004a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergent Media Computer Mediated Communication (CMCMC)</td>
<td>CMC moved from stand-alone (i.e. email) to merged (i.e. SNS) programs (Herring 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergent Media Computer Mediated Discourse (CMCMD)</td>
<td>CMD reflecting new types of content (i.e. wiki edits and status updates), new contexts (i.e. geographically-based SNS), new usage patterns, multi-authorship, and new affordances (i.e. social tagging) (Herring 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA)</td>
<td>An examination of a CA which sees each chosen mode as contributing to the meaning of the whole (Kress 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0</td>
<td>The form of the Web characterized by creative and participatory uses that goes beyond the idea of the page (O'Reilly 2005; Herring 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1.3.2 New technologies and moral panic

Terminology is not the only CMC-related matter that has prompted arguments. Accompanying the spread of the Internet from the scientific community to the popular one was an outcry against the perceived threat of CMC to language. For example, many, especially in the beginning of CMC research, decried the language of the Internet as an impoverished form of communication (Baron 1984), one that posed a threat to both writing and speech (see Thurlow 2006; Baron 2000). One reason for this was the focus on classifying CMC as being either speech-like or writing-like, a task which is difficult at best. As research progressed, the general consensus was that some forms of CMC tended to be more like speech (i.e. synchronous forms like IRC or MMORPGs), some tended to be more like writing (i.e. email and other asynchronous forms), and
others tended to lack easy categorization (Herring 2007). An oft-cited extreme example that journalists used to support their argument that technology was detrimental to language is presented in the following piece of writing, purported to be a school essay written entirely in the style of a text message:

My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4, we used 2 go 2 NY 2C my bro, his GH & thre 3 :-@ kds FTF. ILNY, its gr8. Bt my Ps wr so {:/ Bco 9/11 that thay dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wks up N. Up N, WUCIWUG—0. I ws vvv brd in MON. 0 bt baas & ~~~~~. (Ward 2004)

As if to illustrate the difficulty of interpreting the style, the essay was accompanied by a “translation”:

My summer holidays were a complete waste of time.
Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it’s a great place. But my parents were so worried because of the terrorism attack on September 11 that they decided we would stay in Scotland and spend two weeks up north. Up north, what you see is what you get—nothing. I was extremely bored in the middle of nowhere. Nothing but sheep and mountains. (Ward 2004)

The manner in which this excerpt was presented, and the popular media’s response to this and other such examples of what was referred to as “netspeak”, “e-speak”, “webspeak”, and a host of other terms with negative connotations, reflects a response termed “moral panic” (see Thurlow 2006; Crystal 2001). In a sociological sense, the term refers to “a condition, episode, person or group of persons [that] emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests” (Cohen 1980: 9). Moral
panic is not unique to CMC, but commonly occurs as a response to either new phenomena or perceived deviant behavior. For example, Cohen’s study focused on two social groups (“mods” and “rockers”) that deviated from societal norms. Focusing on linguistically-related occurrences of moral panic, researchers have compared the clamor over the language of CMC to the outcry in response to the printing press. For example, Baron (2011) in her introduction to Thurlow & Mroczek’s (2011) volume of essays on digital discourse, writes that in 1492 Johannes Trithemius, the Abbot of Spondheim, argued that manuscripts copied by hand were better than those printed by press (Baron 2011: xi). However, rather than destroy language, as Trithemius and others feared it would, the printing press helped to standardize language, as well collecting and preserving written works (Eisenstein 1979).

As a further example of how CMC was viewed as a moral panic, Thurlow’s (2006) study of metadiscursive themes of popular media representations of CMC revealed numerous instances of terms with negative connotations. For example, words such as “reprehensible”, “frightening”, “criminal”, and “pointless” were used to describe CMD. Descriptions paralleling CMD with death and disease were also common, evidenced by the use of such terms as “crept”, “riddled”, “spawns”, and “flooding” (Thurlow 2006: 677).

1.3.3 Writing online

Numerous attempts have been made to classify and describe CMC. Some made the case that due to CMC features such as turn-taking and abbreviations, CMC should be viewed as a form of speech (see, e.g. Werry’s study of IRC and Yates’s [1996]

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4 Likewise, such sites as the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine (http://archive.org) provide a valuable way of “preserving” early webpages, which makes many types of research possible, including comparative research between the early Web and more recent iterations.
examination of computer conferencing, both in Herring 1996). Others pointed toward
the structured and often monological nature of CMC language as evidence that it should
be viewed as a form of writing (see the discussion in Baron 1998). Others, however,
argued that interactive forms of CMC evidenced characteristically speech-like features
combined with features common to writing (Ferrara, Brunner & Whittemore 1991).
More recently, and perhaps more accurately, the mindset has moved toward one that
views the nature of CMC (and CMCMC) as dependent on a combination of factors,
including synchronicity (e.g. real time vs. non real time), the number of participants
and the participation structure, and the social rules that accompany a particular form of
communication (Herring 2007). This is the view that the present discussion takes.

1.4 Early CMC Research

As described in §1.3.3, early research viewed language on the Internet as being
novel, neither exactly like speech nor exactly like writing. Likewise, the majority of
early CMC research focused on the features that seemed novel or distinct to language on
the Internet. Androutsopoulos (2006) classifies these studies as the “first wave” of
studies that approach CMC from a linguistic framework. These studies, generally
descriptive, attempted to give an account of the use of such features as emoticons
(Rivera, Cooke & Bauhs 1996; Witmer & Katzman 1997). In addition, these studies
attempted to identify features that would allow for the characterization of different
modes of CMC as distinct genres (Baron 1998; Yates & Sumner 1997). These studies
looked for differences between various types of CMC, such as the difference between the
style of language used in synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication. IRC
or “chat” exemplifies the former, while email exemplifies the latter.

Researchers such as Androutsopoulos (2011), while affirming that studies of this
type have contributed to the body of knowledge about CMC, nonetheless point to the
need for more qualitative studies of CMC in fields such as sociolinguistics in order to
expand socially-situated descriptions of language and communication on the Internet. The present study aims to respond to this need for qualitative descriptions of CMC by providing an analysis of blog discourse.

1.5 A Note on Ethics

Due to the rapid growth of Internet technologies and Internet use, the ethics of using online data and the copyright restrictions on such data is not always clear. In the case of blogs, which are “publicly-private and privately-public” (Waskul & Douglas 1996: 131 in Hookway 2008), the decision was made in this study to treat them as “public acts of writing for an implicit audience” (Hookway 2008: 105) that are governed by the “fair use” policy described in Title 17 §107 of the copyright law of the United States (US Copyright Office).\(^5\) This view was further supported by statements made on several of the selected blogs. Two authors state that their blogs\(^6\) are licensed under Creative Commons Licenses\(^7\), and that they allow content sharing as long as attribution is provided.\(^8\) Another of the bloggers specifies that he makes his material available to readers, citing the “fair use policy of the US copyright law”.\(^9\)

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\(^5\) This decision was approved by the University of North Dakota’s Institutional Review Board (M. Bowles, personal communication, March 7, 2013).

\(^6\) CogDogBlog (see cogdodblog.com) and Hack Education (see hackeducation.com)

\(^7\) Creative Commons Licenses: [http://creativecommons.org/licenses](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/)

\(^8\) Titles of all blog posts consulted for this study are provided in Table C1.

CHAPTER 2
BLOGS AND BLOGOSPHERES

2.1 A Brief History of Blogs

The history of blogs can be traced back to the late 1990s. As the amount of information available on the Internet increased, Internet users began to feel the need to organize this material: blogs were one way of doing so. In 1997, Jorn Barger published his first post on one of the early link list-style sites (see §2.1.1), and decided to come up with an attention-getting name for this type of publishing (Rosenberg 2009). Using the then-popular search engine AltaVista, he started searching for different combinations of “web”, “link”, “list”, and “log” in an attempt to come up with such a term. Finally, he repurposed the term “weblog”, capitalizing the “l” (webLog) to avoid the now ubiquitous “blog” syllable (Barger in Rosenberg 2009: 79).10

Two years later, web designer Peter Merholz coined the term “blog” via a post on his own weblog, announcing, “For what it’s worth, I’ve decided to pronounce the word ‘weblog’ as ‘wee-blog’. Or ‘blog’ for short” (Merholz in Rosenberg 2009: 101). Part of

10 “Web log” was previously used to reference “log files”; a recorded list of data collected from a web server (www.techterms.com/definitionslogfile).
the gradual appeal and subsequent adoption of the term was that it so obviously did not have corporate connections. Even Merholz himself observed that blog sounded “roughly onomatopoeic of vomiting” (Rosenberg 2009: 102). Over the next several years, the form and function of blogs continued to expand and change, as is discussed in §2.1.1.

2.1.1 From link lists and online diaries to blogs

Blogs in their current form have evolved radically from the time the first bloggers coded their first lines. While modern blogs generally combine journal or diary elements, such as lengthy reflective writing, with the embedded links characteristic of early blogs, originally this was not the case. Rather, early bloggers focused on presenting lists of links to websites that interested them in an attempt to organize the vast amount of information on the Web (Blood 2000). Some of the earliest blogs, such as Dave Winer’s Scripting News and Jorn Barger’s Robot Wisdom, consisted almost solely of links, accompanied by brief commentary (Walker Rettberg 2008: 24-25). Figure 1 provides an example of a link-list style blog, from a November 14, 1999 Robot Wisdom entry (Barger 1999). The text preceding each set of parentheses provides the author’s commentary, while the text in parentheses links to other sites.

Fiona Apple interview (Go)
Jane Siberry's own gorgeous website-design (Sheeba)
Jane Siberry world tour dates (Sheeba)
Intriguing rave for literary choose-your-own-adventure (UK Times)
Saturday book review section incl Cryptonomicon (UK Times)
Jean Butler's Riverdance sequel (Irish Times)
The FAQ for his banner-ad source, eAds (via Sabren)
Long rant against comp.ai moderator's policies (via Deja egosurf)
Excellent hardware tidbits from Dvorak (PCMag)
A more complicated DIY web-merchandising model (via NTK)
Fine new Need To Know (C'est)
Awesome Flash kaleidoscope (Ellen)

Figure 1. Example of a Link List from Jorn Barger's Robot Wisdom

18
These early bloggers sought to distance themselves from the online diarists, whose early entries resembled those of traditional diaries (Rosenberg 2009: 28). Figure 2 shows an excerpt from the more diary-like personal blog, Justin’s Links (Hall 1997). When Hall started this blog it resembled a link list, but as he kept writing it became more diary-like. The formatting and content are preserved from the original post.

so she had to go
it was sad
i said, i don't know what i'm going
to do after college now
i mean, i was going to move to sf
to be with her,
hoping to with her to visit her
grandmother in thailand

Figure 2. Sample from the Diary Blog Justin’s Links

To link loggers, these were not true blogs. Indeed, many bloggers viewed themselves not as chroniclers of their own lives, but as

human filters of the web… [They] had the idea that you could, and would, get to know them through their choice of links. They wouldn’t have to compose lengthy life stories online; they would write their own intellectual autobiographies, one link at a time (Rosenberg 2009: 95).

Links were so central to the idea of a blog, in fact, that Rebecca Blood, an early blogger and blog historicist, writes that,

if you are not linking to your primary material when you refer to it…then you are not keeping a weblog…it is the link that gives weblogs their credibility by creating a
transparency that is impossible in any other medium.

(Blood 2002: 18-19)

The advent of free blog-publishing services, such as LiveJournal and WordPress, however, blurred the line between online diaries and blogs (as Blood describes them). These services made it easier than ever for bloggers to produce longer publications with minimal effort, as they no longer had to hand code the HTML of their blogs (Blood 2000). Now, all that was required was clicking and typing in a pre-created box, like that from the popular blog hosting service Blogger, shown in Figure 3.

![Example of a Blank Blogger Post Box from Empty Easel (Edrich 2010)](image)

Figure 3. Example of a Blank Blogger Post Box from *Empty Easel* (Edrich 2010)

As more of these pages filled the Web, their authors, or editors as they are sometimes termed, became aware of each other. Jesse James Garrett, one of blogging’s founders, began to notice the proliferation of these sites with shared features and started to compile a list (Rosenberg 2009: 86). He sent his list to friend, and fellow blogger, Cameron Barrett in November 1998 (Blood 2000). This spurred the creation of

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11 As early bloggers were compilers of lists of links to existing material, rather than writers of a large amount of original text, it is likely that the term “editor” seemed more appropriate.
the blogroll, a “what I’m reading” list of links to other recommended blogs (Rosenberg 2009: 86). At the beginning of 1999, Garrett listed only 23 existing blogs (Blood 2000). In 2006, NMIncite, a marketing research company overseen by Nielsen and McKinsey & Company, reported tracking 36 million blogs. By the end of 2011, the same company reported tracking over 181 million blogs (Nielsen 2012).

This dramatic shift resulted partly from the creation of free blog-building software. Prior to the introduction of such services as Pitas, Blogger, and Groksoup, publishing a blog required HTML coding knowledge (Blood 2000). Not only this, it also required owning a web domain and a web hosting account. New blogging tools made it easier for anyone with basic knowledge of technology to start a blog. As blogging became more accessible, the range of represented professions grew from technology-related professions to include journalists, lawyers, educators, and others (Rosenberg 2009: 172). In the Web 2.0 world, only basic computer knowledge was necessary to publish blog entries containing not only writing and links, but also pictures, videos, and audio (2009: 310).

As the ease of creating content online has increased, the complexity of content created by Internet users has also grown. Interestingly, sites have expanded in two disparate directions, becoming either more integrated or more specialized. For example, social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook and Google+ allow users to upload pictures, videos, and sound files, and also allow blogging and user interaction from one central page. However, sites such as Pinterest and Flickr have the specialized

12 Blogrolls could be considered an early manifestation of the friend lists now present on social networking sites such as Facebook.
focus of photo sharing; the microblogging site Twitter is focused on extremely short posts limited to 140 characters (Rosenberg 2009: 130), and sites such as YouTube focus on video sharing. These sites and other new functionalities of the Web will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

2.2 Blogospheres

As the number of blogs grew, many felt a need to develop a term that would describe the interconnected network of bloggers. In 2002, William Quick, on his blog Daily Pundit, declared, “I propose a name for the intellectual cyberspace we bloggers occupy: the Blogosphere” (Quick 2002). In simpler terms, as defined by the blog tracking service Technorati in their annual report on the “State of the Blogosphere,” it refers to the “collective community of all blogs” (Winn 2009: n.p.). While originally the term encompassed all blogs, no matter the topic, it is now perhaps more appropriate to refer to “blogospheres” in the plural due to the large number of distinct blogger communities on the Internet. Although all blogs do comprise a general community, as the number of blog topics has increased, many sub-communities have been created. Just as people tend to form relationships based on shared interests, so too do bloggers tend to read and follow the blogs of individuals who either have shared interests or who work in the same industry.14 Each such sub-community thus forms a social network of its own within the larger blogosphere. Since this is the case, the present discussion focuses on only one of the many blogospheres—the education blogosphere.

14 Perhaps more prevalent in blogospheres than in life “offline” are those who appear to seek out bloggers with whom they disagree in order to provide extensive comments attacking these bloggers and their opinions.
2.2.1 Blogospheres as communities of practice

A blogosphere, however, is more than just a group of people occupying the same space or sharing a certain characteristic—such as self-identifying as a blogger—which is a basic definition of community (Oxford Dictionary 2013). Bloggers are aware of each other and do not seek to isolate themselves. Instead, blogging is very much a social activity, with bloggers interacting with one another in the form of pingbacks\textsuperscript{15}, trackbacks, links, and blogroll listings (Blood 2000), as well as post comments, which were once a rarity and an optional add-on, but now a standard feature of blogs (Rosenberg 2009: 149).

Bloggers learn from one another, both about becoming more proficient at blogging and about their shared field of interest. Thus, each blogosphere can be termed a community of practice, according to the definition proposed by social learning theorist Étienne Wenger. He defines communities of practice as, “...groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and [who] learn how to do it better as they interact with one another” (Wenger 2006).

2.2.2 Educators 2.0: Teachers and administrators online

Web 2.0 not only provides a way to increase student engagement and promote increased interaction with material beyond what is possible in the classroom, but also gives teachers and administrators a way to communicate with one another outside of the school setting. It gives them an opportunity to learn not only from coworkers, but also to learn from those working in the same industry across the country and across the world. Many blogs and websites exist that provide teachers with lesson plans (i.e. scholastic.com, readwritethink.org, teachers.net, lessonplanspage.com, thinkfinity.org),

\textsuperscript{15} A pingback is a type of “remote comment” that notifies, i.e., blogger A when blogger B links to one of blogger A’s posts (WordPress support).
classroom management strategies (i.e. teachingchannel.org, educationworld.com, teacherspayteachers.com), links to free resources (tes.co.uk/teachingresources, free.ed.gov, freetech4teachers.com, teachingideas.co.uk), and general advice about dealing with medical leave, first-year teaching struggles, and navigating the politics of teacher unions, school districts, and building policies (reddit.com/r/Teachers, technology.com, teachers.org.uk).

2.2.3 The education blogosphere

At the time of writing, no site that tracked the total number of education blogs was found. However, the site TeacherPortal.com, operated by the marketing and media corporation QuinStreet, Inc., is attempting to compile such a directory. Currently, the site is tracking 1250 education blogs (QuinStreet 2013). As the site requires a blogger to access it and create a profile in order for his or her blog to be added to the directory, it is likely that this number represents only a small portion of education blogs.

2.2.4 Classroom 2.0: Online syllabi and class blogs

The features of Web 2.0 not only make it easier to publish blog posts but also make it easier to create a basic web page faster than ever before. Many educators have thus turned to the Web as a painless way to post class assignments and syllabi, in addition to providing contact information and a forum to answer student and parent (if applicable) questions. In addition to this function, blogger Henry Farrell, a George Washington University Associate Professor of political science and international affairs, proposes four additional ways to bring the classroom online: a blog written by the professor (or teacher) that relates to course themes, a platform for class discussions, a place for student-led and student-mediated discussions, and student blogs written as part of the course grade (Farrell 2003).
2.2.5 Teacher’s lounge 2.0: Lunchroom chatter online

In addition to providing a place for educators to share ideas with one another and learn from one another in a professional capacity, the Internet also gives educators a venue to air day-to-day frustrations and irritations. From blogs such as Successful Teaching (Hensley 2013) to anonymous discussions on Reddit (EdSurge 2012) to quitting one’s job on YouTube (Knight 2013), the Internet is full of opportunities to share stories about teaching experiences (sometimes overshare; see, e.g. Caulfield 2012; Heussner & Fahmy 2010; Solomon 2011).

2.3 Why Study Blogs?

The nature, availability, and diversity of data make blogs an ideal medium for linguistic study. Blog data tends to be “unfiltered”.\(^\text{16}\) That is, it is not subject to the style, length, and content constraints often found in, for example, a piece produced for a large media corporation (i.e. see the submission guidelines for Edutopia and SmartBlogs from SmartBrief).\(^\text{17}\) As a result, blog data provides an example of writing in a natural environment—one where writers tend to be less concerned about style and editing.

Blog data is easily accessible; in many cases, all that is required to read blogs is a computer with an Internet connection. Furthermore, it encompasses a wide range of topics, making it a good medium to study the type of language used in a certain profession, a certain region, or to compare the styles of language used in different contexts (i.e. a post for a class compared to a personal diary entry). Early blogger

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\(^\text{16}\) Blogs written for a specific company or organization will naturally have more stringent requirements than those written by an individual for a personal blog due to the viewpoint of the organization, company regulations, etc.

\(^\text{17}\) Edutopia: http://www.edutopia.org/contact-us; SmartBlogs: http://smartblogs.com/interested-in-writing-for-smartblogs/
Justin Hall speaks to these advantages of writing on the Internet in his response to the proposed Communication Decency Act of 1996\textsuperscript{18}:

You can’t make people shut up. they will find a way to say what they want to, if they really need to. that’s what’s wonderful about the internet. they can say it, and you don’t have to read it. [Formatting in original] (Hall in Rosenberg 2009: 29)

\textsuperscript{18} The act sought to limit the use of networked computers to display “indecent” material, unless an “effective” method was put into place that would prevent access by individuals under 18 (Bernstein 1996).
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Due to the complex nature of the topic of Discourse, the present study draws from the work of numerous individuals in three subfields of linguistics: literacy, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics. It also draws from theories in the fields of communication, literary analysis, and sociology. Each subsection in this chapter details the work of one individual; however, the sections are organized based on the theorists’ ideas rather than on their field of study. The final subsection draws together the relevant portions of their work to present a preliminary interdisciplinary theory for analyzing blog discourse.

3.1 Multiliteracies and New Literacy Studies

3.1.1 Literacy as ideology: Brian Street

Prior to 1984, the major model of literacy was one known as the autonomous model. As the name suggests, this model, reflected in the work of Gough (1995), Greenfield (1972), Hildyard & Olson (as cited in Street 1984) and Goody (1963; 1977), proposes that literacy is a neutral concept that, when introduced, will have similar, and predominantly positive, effects across communities (Street 2003). The model further
proposes that literacy on its own will affect other aspects of both society and individual thinking. As Street describes it,

Introducing literacy to poor, ‘illiterate’ people, villages, urban youth, etc. will have the effect of enhancing their cognitive skills, improving their economic prospects, making them better citizens, regardless of the social and economic conditions that accounted for their ‘illiteracy’ in the first place. (2003: 77)

However, many, including Street, have criticized the autonomous model as being not only simplistic, but also tied to Western ideas of literacy. Thus, instead of the autonomous model, Street proposes an “ideological model” of literacy. In this model, rather than being viewed as a neutral skill, literacy is viewed as being inseparable from societal principles and norms. It “is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill… it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles… it is also always embedded in social practices…” (Street 2003: 77-78).

Street (1984: 8) summarizes the ideological model of literacy as evidencing six main characteristics, which are listed below in an adapted version:

- The meaning of literacy is dependent on the social organizations in which it is found
- Literacy cannot be treated as an independent (“autonomous”) entity; various forms are influenced by social and political systems
- The types of reading and writing practices that are taught depend on aspects of social structure and the role of “educational institutions”
- It is more appropriate to refer to “literacies” rather than a singular “literacy”
- Writers who accept the ideological model recognize that analyzing the political and ideological model of literacy practices can be problematic
3.1.2 New literacy studies: James Paul Gee and Brian Street

The so-called New Literacy Studies (NLS) came out of Street’s (1984) efforts to reframe literacy as a social practice.\(^{19}\) One of the main foci of NLS is that “in practice, literacy varies from one context to another and from one culture to another and so, therefore, do the effects of the different literacies in different conditions” (Street 2003: 77). As a result of this, Gee (2000) proposed the term “social languages”, recognizing that “people create from the grammatical resources of a language…quite specific sublanguages” (2000: 412-413). These languages are used to enact specific identities and perform different meaning-making activities. This idea, combined with Gee’s (2005 and 2011) idea of Discourses, is key to the present study, especially in examining how different varieties of language are used in blog discourse. Gee’s idea of Discourses will be discussed in §3.1.3 and his idea of social languages will be revisited in §5.2.2.

3.1.3 Tools for analyzing Discourse: James Paul Gee

Closely related to Gee’s idea of social languages is his idea of Discourses. More specifically, his differentiation between discourse and Discourse (Gee 2011) informs the present study. Thus, it is not only important to consider what a blogger writes and how he or she writes it, but also to consider the myriad elements that bloggers use in meaning making. Numerous resources are available to bloggers, including mediums such as video, audio, writing, and photos, as well as tools such as social languages, intertextuality, figured worlds, and Discourses. In the remainder of this section, each of these tools will be described briefly in order to set up the analysis of blog data in Chapter 5.

\(^{19}\) See www.newliteracies.com/au for an overview of New Literacies.
The first tool that Gee discusses is that of situated meaning. Situated meaning refers not only to general meaning (i.e. lexical meaning) but to the meaning that a word or structure takes on in relationship to its context of use (2011: n.p.). For example, in education, the term “testing” often does not refer just to examinations in general (lexical meaning), but rather to state-mandated periods of high-stakes standardized examinations (situated meaning). The idea of situated meaning is helpful not only in examining diction and connotations, but also in analyzing syntactic choices, such as topic (subject) placement choices (Gee 2011: n.p).

Gee’s (2011) second tool deals with social languages, which were discussed briefly in §3.1.2. The concept of social language in Gee’s more recent discussion (2011) is similar to the concept of register. In order to fully understand what a speaker is saying (or what a writer is writing), it is necessary to not only know who is speaking, but what identity the person is speaking as (Gee 2011: n.p.). For example, in the case of the bloggers in this study, it is necessary to know if they are speaking from their identities as educational professionals, their identities as parents or spouses, or from other possible identities.

According to Gee (2011), any given social language has two types of grammar. First, a social language has a specific formal grammar, comprised of phrases and clauses and different parts of speech. A social language also has a specific set of collocational patterns that, when taken together, communicate a particular social identity and seek to achieve a certain goal or accomplish a specific purpose (Gee 2011: n.p.). Of course, one piece of speech or writing is likely not limited to one social language. Rather, social languages often occur in a heteroglossic relationship, where two or more social languages are used together. A communicative act could evidence multiple registers of the same language, two (or more) different languages used for different purposes, or a combination of these. The idea of heteroglossia will be discussed in more detail in §3.2.
The third tool is that of intertextuality. This refers to the situation where a speaker or writer alludes, quotes, or references what someone else has said or written. In order for intertextuality to be successful, naturally, the source must be familiar to those hearing the utterance or reading the work that includes the reference. Intertextuality also occurs when a piece of writing prepared in one primary style includes a second style of language, which is associated with a different identity. For example, an article consulted for this paper had the title “Linguistic Ruin? LOL! Instant Messaging and Teen Language” (Tagliamonte & Denis 2008). This title incorporates the expression “LOL” from the style of SMS and IRC with the style associated with scholarly journals. Similarly, works can be stylistically intertextual, using a style associated with, for example, text messaging, to present content that is not generally associated with texting, such as the essay presented in §1.3.2.

The fourth tool deals with the various stories that people have stored in their minds in order to represent what is typical or normal of a given situation or way of acting. Gee (2011) terms these typical stories “figured worlds”, a term which he attributes to Dorothy Holland (as cited in Gee 2011). For example, based on background, culture, and numerous other factors, many different figured worlds could exist for descriptions of a typical college campus or college class.

Finally, Gee (2011) presents the tool of Discourses (Big ‘D’ Discourses). As mentioned previously, a Big ‘D’ Discourse relates not only to how language is used but also to how “distinctive ways of acting, interacting with others, believing, valuing, dressing, and [the use of] various sorts of objects and tools in various sorts of distinctive environments” (2011: n.p.) are combined to create an identity. Just as social languages serve to communicate a particular identity, so too do Discourses. Gee (2005) writes that what a person says is meaningful

…only if and when it communicates a who and a what

(Wieder & Pratt 1990a)...a “who” is a socially situated
identity, the kind of person one is seeking to be and enact here-and-now...a “what” is a socially situated activity that the utterance helps to constitute. (22) [Italics in the original]

While Discourses can be studied in a more complete form when access is available to F2F communication situations, it is nonetheless possible to apply Gee’s (2011) theory to written language. For example, it is still possible to examine the identity a person is trying to present and to discuss the types of beliefs, values, tools, technologies, etc. that are associated with a certain Discourse (Gee 2011: n.p.). Each of Gee’s tools emphasizes the socially-situated nature of communication, and the stylistic choices that individuals make when communicating. However, it is not the case that individuals select one Discourse or one social language to communicate one identity in a given situation. Rather, based on the desired goals of the communicative act, individuals select situated meanings, intertextual references, social languages, and Discourses, blending them together in a process known as heteroglossia (Gee 2012: Ch. 6 Heteroglossia).

3.2 Heteroglossia

As mentioned previously in §1.2 and §3.1.3, heteroglossia occurs when two or more languages or two or more social languages are used in the same communicative act. In addition to Gee (2011, 2012), whose conception of heteroglossia has already been discussed in §3.1.3, the concept of heteroglossia as explained by two other current researchers, Jannis Androutsopoulos (2011) and Benjamin Bailey (2007), will also guide the present analysis. Before briefly introducing their ideas, however, it is necessary to discuss the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, to whom the concept of heteroglossia is often attributed.
3.2.1 *Mikhail Bakhtin*

Frequently cited in relationship to heteroglossia is literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin, in discussing the literary genre of the novel, writes that it can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized...the novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. (Bakhtin 1981[1975])

What is translated as “social diversity of speech types” is Bakhtin’s Russian neologism *raznorečie*, often translated heteroglossia. His term refers specifically to social-ideological speech types or discourses, similar to what Gee (2005) describes as social languages. Bakhtin goes on to speak of the way that these social varieties of language are organized, saying that a language is not only divided into different dialects, but that language is...stratified as well into languages that are socio-ideological: languages belonging to professions, to genres, languages peculiar to particular generations, etc. This stratification of speech [*raznorečivost’*] will spread wider and penetrate to ever deeper levels so long as a language is alive and still in the process of becoming. (Bakhtin 1981[1975])
3.2.2 Jannis Androutsopoulos

Another researcher who makes explicit this connection between Bakhtin’s theory and modern day speech and writing situations, especially those on the Internet, is Jannis Androutsopoulos. As mentioned previously, Androutsopoulos (2011) has argued that approaching CMC (or, for the purposes of this discussion, CMCMC) from a heteroglossic perspective, rather than from a variationist perspective, can better deal with discourse containing multiple languages, multiple social languages, or multiple Discourses. Such a perspective is thus useful in examining CMC (and CMCMC) communicative acts that contain multiple Discourses and multiple mediums. Important to note in Androutsopoulos’s conception of heteroglossia is the idea that heteroglossia is made, rather than naturally occurring as with other types of language variation (2011: 282). Thus, he views it as “the outcome of purposeful and often artistic semiotic activity”, which “invites us to examine contemporary new media environments as sites of tension and contrast between linguistic resources, social identities, and ideologies” (2011: 283-284).

Androutsopoulos has also contributed numerous examples that show how Bakhtin’s theory can be applied to CMC research. Most recently he has examined language use on YouTube (2013a), codeswitching in CMC (2013b), and Facebook language practices (forthcoming).

3.2.3 Benjamin Bailey

Another researcher who has worked with the idea of heteroglossia is Benjamin Bailey, who presents the following two-part definition of the term:

Heteroglossia addresses (a) the simultaneous use of different kinds of forms or signs and (b) the tensions and conflicts among those signs, based on the sociohistorical associations they carry with them… [It also] captures the
inherent political and sociohistorical associations of any linguistic form, i.e. its indexical meanings or…social connotations…these are not explicit or static, but rather must be interpreted…they are thus shifting, subjective, and negotiated. (Bailey 2007: 257-258)

This definition echoes both Street’s (1984) definition of literacy as ideological, and Gee’s (2000) conception of social languages. It reflects the view that language is social, with communication as its primary purpose. The idea that meaning must be negotiated based on context also fits well with NLS ideas, and supports Gee’s (2011) view of Discourses, not just discourses, as being crucial to making meaning. In terms of blogs, and CMCMC more generally, Bailey’s (2007) definition accounts for both the varied kinds of mediums that are used and the social currency and connotations that these mediums and CMCMC forms have.

### 3.3 Toward a Model of Discourse Analysis for Blogs

#### 3.3.1 Analyzing “Big ‘D’ Discourse”: Gee

The main method used in the current analysis is that described by Gee (2005), who presents ways to analyze not only the commonly understood notion of discourse (which he refers to as “language-in-use”), but also Discourse with a capital ‘D’. This, what he terms “Big ‘D’ Discourse”, refers not only to language-in-use, but also to everything else that people with language in order to communicate meaning. Communicative acts cannot exist independently of individuals, but must be socially-situated. Language and other features of communication are not distinct from one another. Rather, Gee says,

you are who you are partly through *what* you are doing and *what* you are doing is partly recognized for what it is by *who* is doing it...[thus] utterances communicate an
integrated, though often multiple or ‘heteroglossic,’ *who-doing-what.* (Gee 2005: 23) [Italics in original]

### 3.3.2 Critical discourse analysis: Fairclough

While Gee’s (2005) model is the primary one used in this analysis, other models, such as the critical discourse analysis model, also aided in examination of the data. Fairclough (1999) explains critical discourse analysis as follows:

> Critical discourse analysis aims to provide a framework for systematically linking properties of...texts with features of their social and cultural circumstances. Particular discursive events...are described in terms of the potentially innovative ways in which they draw upon the

(1999: 79-80)

### 3.3.3 Multimodal discourse analysis: Kress

In addition to the principles of critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (1999), those of MMDA as described by Kress (2012) and discussed in §1.3.1 were also consulted for this study.

### 3.4 Summary of Consulted Theories

Thus, the present study draws from the three theories of discourse analysis presented in §3.3. Different elements of each theory were combined in order to best analyze the multi-medium and participatory communicative acts found in Web 2.0 settings such as blogs. Each theory served a different role, with Gee’s (2011) theoretical tools being primarily used for the analysis, as will be seen in the following chapter. However, the idea of literacy being an ideological process and the concept of
heteroglossia both provide necessary background that helps to ground the study. Chapter 4 will discuss how these theories were applied to conduct the blog analysis.
CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

4.1 Blog Selection

Blog selection took place in two phases, each of which consisted of several steps. The ultimate goal of the selection process was to choose only five blogs, each of which, upon initial examination, appeared to evidence the use of multiple Discourses. As such, each step of each phase of the selection process aimed to narrow the number of total blogs, from a large representative sample of education blogs to a small focused sample.

4.1.1 Initial blog selection

First, an initial list of education blogs was composed. Earlier blog researchers used blog tracking services such as blo.gs (Herring et al. 2004: 3), Pubsub (Scheidt 2005) and Technorati (Hookway 2008) to collect samples of blogs. However, as blo.gs and Pubsub are no longer maintained and Technorati has not classified education blogs into a subject category, it was necessary to use other sources to find lists of blogs relevant to the present study. Thus, the first step in initial blog collection was examining ranking lists of education blogs. In order to obtain a representative picture of the education blogosphere, three different ranking lists were consulted. In addition to these ranking lists, the decision was made to include a list of blogs that were selected using modified
snowball sampling (Oliver 2006). This process will be discussed in more detail at the end of this section. It was thought that snowball sampling would increase the number of perspectives represented in the study, as the ranking lists were based on blog popularity and influence.

The first ranking list of blogs examined was the Teach100, which is maintained by the University of Southern California’s [USC] Rossier School of Education (USC 2013). As the name suggests, the site ranks the top 100 education blogs, according to several criteria. The site includes a total of 334 blogs; however, for this study only the top 100 were included. Based on blog editor or reader recommendations, the site compiles a database of blogs. Every day, the site scans those blogs in the database and assigns an aggregate score to each. This score is based on three objective components and one subjective component. The three objective components are as follow: Social (40% of the score), which refers to reader interaction with the blog through social media shares; Activity (20%), which refers to the frequency of updates, and Authority (20%), which refers to the number of other sites linking to the blog. Teach Score, the subjective component, encompasses such elements as blog layout, media use (i.e. podcasts and videos), and the manner of topic presentation and discussion. This component makes up the remaining 20% of the aggregate score (About Teach100).

The second ranking list was much smaller, comprising only 30 blogs. The “second largest WordPress site in the world”, Edublogs, whose parent company is Incsub (Incsub.com), compiled this second list, the Edublog Awards (Watters 2012b). This list included nominees for and winners of the site’s award for Best Teacher Blog of 2012. While Teach100 uses an aggregate score to rank blogs, the Edublogs list is based on user nominations and votes. Blogs were nominated for the award via a blog post and

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20 The list presented in this paper reflects the top 100 blogs as it existed on March 28, 2013.
accompanying link to the Edublogs Award site on the nominator’s blog and by completing a short nomination form indicating the category to which the blog was nominated. The contest included 20 categories, such as Best Class Blog, Best Individual Blog, and Best EdTech Blog. On a pre-determined date (no longer given on the site), contest judges created a shortlist of the blogs by examining the number of nominations received—not including self-nominations or entries that in other ways did not follow the provided nomination rules—and other factors such as reader engagement, which was determined by the number of links, comments, or pingbacks (Waters 2012a).

Following the creation of this nomination shortlist, users were given the opportunity to vote for their favorite shortlisted blog in each category. The winner, runners-up, and shortlisted finalists were then announced in an online awards ceremony and listed on the webpage for Edublogs Best Teacher Blog of 2012 (Waters 2012b).

The third source used was a list of the 100 most influential education blogs compiled by market research and business insight company Onalytica (Moldovan 2013). The company determined the relative influence of each blog using their Influence Index, which is based on the Input/Output model of economics developed by Nobel Prize winning economist Wassily Leontief (Madsen 2013). Onalytica considers three elements when determining influence: influence index, popularity, and over-influence, which refers to how influential a blog is compared to how popular it is (Madsen 2013).

Following the compilation of the initial blog list from these three sources, four blogs were randomly selected from each source for snowball sampling. The three criteria used to determine which blogs to use for snowball sampling are listed below:

1. The blog was edited by one individual
2. The blog was not written for or affiliated with any organization
3. The blog had a blogroll

If the selected blog met these criteria, six blogs were selected from the blogroll to include in the initial list (by-passing duplicates): the first two, the last two, and the
median two blogs from the blogroll. If the selected blog did not have a blogroll, a different blog was chosen.

The completed initial list thus contained a total of 307 blogs. From this list, duplicate blogs were eliminated, as were blogs determined to be written by more than one person and those written for or explicitly affiliated with an organization. Blogs whose content was deemed too specialized for the purpose of the study, such as a blog listing free tech tools for teachers (Byrne 2013) and one discussing an English Language Arts curriculum built around films (Donaghy 2013) were excluded from further analysis. It was thought that extremely specialized content might lessen the likelihood that multiple Discourses would be present. In addition, blogs that were devoted to class assignments, which were more properly classified as personal websites, that were inaccessible after multiple attempts, or that did not contain enough text for analysis, were excluded.

Table 2 provides a summary of the total number of blogs gathered from each source, as well as the number of blogs excluded from further analysis and the resulting number of included blogs from all four sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Total number of blogs</th>
<th>Number excluded</th>
<th>Number included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach 100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edublogs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onalytica Top 100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball Samples</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 The complete initial list of blogs, not including duplicates, is provided in Table A1 in Appendix A accompanied by web addresses. All blogs were last accessed using the provided web addresses on June 28, 2013.
4.1.2 Refinement of blog selection

After these preliminary exclusions were made, a list of 174 blogs remained, all of which were determined to be personal blogs, each written by only one author. From this list, those blogs that had not been updated within one week of initial access were excluded, as were those that had not been updated an average of once per week over the course of one year, due to the diachronic nature of the study. From the resulting list of 37 blogs, posts from each were skimmed to determine whether multiple Discourses appeared to be present. Those blogs that did not have multiple posts evidencing multiple Discourses were excluded.

From the resulting list of fifteen blogs, five blogs were selected to analyze in depth. In order to determine if a relationship existed between the frequency of multiple Discourse use and posting frequency, blogs that averaged varying numbers of posts were selected. Two blogs with a low number of posts, two blogs with a median number of posts, and one blog with a high number of posts were chosen.

Table 3 part A, presents the names of the five blogs selected for in-depth analysis as well as the total number of posts in the blog’s history, the number of posts over the past year, and the average number of posts per month in the past year. Information about the ten blogs not selected for in-depth analysis is provided in part B of Table 3.

Table 3. Revision of Blog Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog Title</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Posts in Past Year</th>
<th>Avg. Posts/Month in Past Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CogDogBlog</td>
<td>3661</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>32.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hack Education</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>24.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeschooling with P.T.</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>12.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREAPrez</td>
<td>5592</td>
<td>1431</td>
<td>110.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jose Vilson</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>12.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. Blogs excluded from further analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog Title</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Posts in Past Year</th>
<th>Avg. Posts/Month in Past Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogging Through the Fourth Dimension</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>14.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blue Skunk Blog</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>20.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerously Irrelevant</td>
<td>1707</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>15.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Notes Online</td>
<td>4269</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>64.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC Educator</td>
<td>3606</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized Chaos</td>
<td>1589</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>18.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Organized Classroom Blog</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>12.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read. Write. Connect. Learn</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>10.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reading Zone</td>
<td>1328</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>11.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers as Technology Trailblazers</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>9.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2 Methods for Initial Analysis

#### 4.2.1 Faceted classification: Dell Hymes, Susan Herring

As a means of gathering basic information about the selected blogs, and of making preliminary observations to prepare for analysis, Herring’s (2007) faceted classification scheme was applied to each of the selected blogs. Herring’s (2007) scheme includes both medium and situational factors. While Herring includes numerous factors for each category, only the relevant factors are presented in the following two tables. Table 4A provides medium factors and Table 4B provides situational factors.
Table 4. Medium Factors and Situational Factors (adapted from Herring 2007)

a. Medium factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium factor</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persistence of transcript</td>
<td>How long do messages stay in the system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channels of communication</td>
<td>Which mediums are available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous messaging</td>
<td>Does the system allow anonymous messages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private messaging</td>
<td>Does the system allow private messages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filtering</td>
<td>Can the author filter the comments that are submitted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoting</td>
<td>Does the system automatically quote the previously posted material?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Situation factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation factor</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation structure</td>
<td>How large is the group? How many members are active participants? What is the degree of anonymity/pseudonymity? Is the site public or private? Is the communication one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant characteristics</td>
<td>What are the demographic characteristics of participants? What is the “real life” status of online personas? What are some of the attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and motivations of participants? What experience does the participant have with the addressee/group/topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>What is the group’s purpose? What is the goal of the interaction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic or theme</td>
<td>What are the topics/themes of groups and exchanges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>What activity is taking place? Exchange of information? A joking exchange? A phatic exchange?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>What norms, i.e. of organization, language, social appropriateness are, are evidenced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>What languages or language varieties are being used? What font or writing system is being used?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This scheme provides a way to gather basic information about the blogs. In addition, an adapted model of Hymes’s (1972) etic grid was also used to make initial observations about the blogs.
As Hymes’s (1972) etic grid, often referred to as the SPEAKING model, was, as the name suggests, developed to study spoken language, some revision is needed in order to make it useful in studying written discourse. Table 5 presents the components of Hymes’s (1972) SPEAKING model and provides necessary adaptations for analyzing written discourse.

Table 5. Hymes’s (1972) SPEAKING Grid with Adaptations for Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Adaptation for Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation: Setting and Scene</td>
<td>Physical circumstances of a speech act; psychological circumstances of a speech act</td>
<td>Physical and psychological circumstances described by the author in communicative act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Those taking part in a speech act: Speaker, Addressor, Addressee, Hearer</td>
<td>Those taking part in a communicative act: Writer, Reader, Commenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ends</td>
<td>Outcomes and goals</td>
<td>Outcomes and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Sequence</td>
<td>Message form and message content</td>
<td>Message form and message content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Modality: The tone, manner, or spirit of a speech act</td>
<td>The tone or style of the communicative act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentalities</td>
<td>Channels and forms of speech</td>
<td>Mediums used in writing; form of the communicative act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms of Interpretation</td>
<td>Features of a speech act that evidence a community’s belief system</td>
<td>Features of a communicative act that show an individual’s and/or community’s belief system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genres</td>
<td>Categories of a speech act (i.e. poem, lecture, myth)</td>
<td>Categories of a communicative act</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each blog as a whole was first classified using Herring’s (2007) medium factors, while individual blog posts were classified according to the situational factors. Due to the scope of the study, only a limited number of posts were described using this method (See Chapter 5). Furthermore, the situational factors for each post are not discussed in length; they are mentioned when pertinent to the analysis. It was thought that an examination of the situational factors would provide information about distinctive features that would aid in the determination of the presence of distinct Discourses.
4.2.2 Analysis using Gee’s building tasks

After summarizing general blog features, several blog posts from each of the five bloggers were selected to use for the analysis. The large amount of collected data (2,406 individual blog posts) made it impractical to do an in-depth analysis of every post, especially considering the preliminary nature of the present study. Instead, after reading each post, posts were considered from the frame of Gee’s (2005) building tasks, each of which is accompanied by a question, in order to select posts that were thought to serve as the best examples of Discourse use. Gee’s (2005) seven building tasks and corresponding analysis questions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Gee’s Seven Building Tasks and Discourse Analysis Questions (2005: 11-13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>How is the piece of language being used to cause certain things to be significant or not and in what ways?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as going on)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identities</td>
<td>What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as operative)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics (the distribution of social goods)</td>
<td>What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e. what is being communicated as to what is taken to be “normal,” “right,” “like or not like me,” “the way things are,” etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign systems and knowledge</td>
<td>How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems (e.g., Spanish vs. English, technical language vs. everyday language, words vs. images, words vs. equations) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3 Selection of blog posts for analysis

After the answers to these questions were compiled, example posts were selected from each blogger. Twelve posts were selected from each blog, one per month for the year-long period under study. In addition, one post was selected from each blog that was representative of the primary Discourse of each blogger. This resulted in thirteen total selected posts for each blogger, for a total of 65 posts. In addition, two bloggers had weekly-feature type posts. For example, PREAPrez published a post made up of compiled links each Sunday, which was termed “Sunday Mail”. The Hack Education blog featured a weekly podcast that was linked to the blog; the blogger produced a post each week that included the podcast stream. For these bloggers, one post from each of the regular categories was selected in addition to the original thirteen posts. The addition of these “feature” posts resulted in a total of 75 posts, which formed a corpus of 58,046 words. The resulting selection of posts is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Blog Posts Selected for Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog Title</th>
<th>Posts evidencing different Discourses</th>
<th>Regular feature posts</th>
<th>Total number of posts analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CogDogBlog</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hack Education</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeschooling with P.T.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jose Vilson</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREAPrez</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Analysis of Selected Blog Posts

4.3.1 Division into stanzas and lines

After compiling the list of posts, each of the selected posts was analyzed in detail. First, the lines and stanzas of each post were labeled in order to both examine the structure of the posts and to aid in identifying examples referenced in this discussion.
Generally, these divisions are determined by analyzing such features as stress and pitch movement (See Gee 2005: 125). However, these features were obviously not present in the current analysis (excepting the podcast and video posts) as it deals with written language. Thus, stanzas and lines were determined by examining the existing paragraphs and clauses in each post. When a sentence contained more than one clause, and the break between clauses was unclear, an effort was made to break lines so that each contained one verb and its accompanying participants. This is demonstrated in (1) from Klonsky (2013). The original line from the post is indicated in the numbered line, and the division points are indicated in the lines following the initial line.

(1)

4. Why do we say saddled up when we sit at a bar? I asked
   4a. Why do we say saddled up
   4b. when we sit at a bar?
   4c. I asked

(Klonsky 2013)

Where special font effects were used in the post (i.e. bold, italic, or all caps) the words or words using these were taken to be the emphasis of the line, unless the context suggested otherwise. This choice was made due to research that suggests that these effects are often chosen to parallel non-verbal cues, such as tone of voice, which would be used in spoken communication (Tu 2002). Examples (2) and (3) demonstrate the use of text effects to indicate emphasis.

(2)

19. I believe I shall fear no man

(Vilson 2012c) [Bold text in original]

(3)

26. And it is a *remix*it has a different audio track (me introducing, my students making sounds)

(Levine 2013b) [Formatting in original]
4.3.2 Gee’s discourse analysis toolkit: Four theoretical tools

The analysis uses four of the theoretical tools proposed by Gee (2011: Section 4.1). Each of these tools was presented and described in detail in §3.1.3. Following the division of posts into stanzas and lines, each was analyzed using a selection of the twenty-six questions proposed by Gee (2005: 110-113). These questions deal with each of Gee's seven building tasks, which were presented in §4.2.2. Only a selection of the questions was used for this analysis, due to the scope of the study. As the focus is on examining the presence and use of Discourses, only the questions in Table 8 were examined in the selected blog posts. These questions were thought to be the most relevant for achieving the goals of this study. The numbering of the questions is replicated from Gee’s (2005) original list. The complete list of Gee’s questions is provided in Appendix D.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Building Tasks</th>
<th>Analysis Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Building significance**                                    | 1. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?  
|                                                             | 2. What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, people, objects, artifacts, and institutions relevant in this situation?  
|                                                             | 3. What situated meanings and values are attached to other oral and written texts quoted or alluded to in the situation (intertextuality)?  
|                                                             | 4. What Discourse models seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?  |
| **Building identities**                                      | 11. In terms of identities, activities, and relationships, what Discourses are relevant (And irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  |
| **Building relationships**                                   | 14. How are other oral or written texts quoted or alluded to so as to set up certain relationships to other texts, people, or Discourses?  |
| **Building connections**                                     | 19. What sorts of connections are made to previous or future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions, and Discourses outside the current situation?  |
| **Building significance for sign systems and knowledge**      | 22. What sign systems are relevant (or irrelevant) in the situation (e.g., speech, writing, images, and gestures)? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  
|                                                             | 25. What social languages are relevant (or irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  |

a. Adapted from Gee (2005: 110-113)

### 4.3.3 Summary of methodology

The steps conducted in the analysis process of the selected blog posts, as detailed in §4.2.1-4.3.2, are summarized below:
1. Classify blogs according to Herring’s (2007) medium factors

2. Select blog posts evidencing multiple Discourses (At least 13 from each blogger)

3. Describe blog posts according to Herring’s (2007) situational factors

4. Analyze structure of posts by splitting into stanzas and lines

5. Focus analysis using Gee’s (2011) four theoretical tools and by asking a selection of Gee’s twenty-six questions related to building tasks

Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study, first giving a summary of each blog using Herring’s (2007) medium factors. Following this, examples from a selection of blog posts are analyzed in detail according to Gee’s four theoretical tools.
CHAPTER 5
INTRODUCTION TO SELECTED BLOGS

The five blogs that were selected and named in Table 3, part A (§4.1.2) will each be described in detail in this chapter. A discussion of the medium factors of each blog will also be presented. Table 9 at the end of this chapter provides a summary of these medium factors. Following this, an analysis of blog data using four of Gee's five theoretical tools will be presented.

5.1.1 CogDogBlog

CogDogBlog (http://cogdogblog.com) discusses technology in the context of the author's work in digital storytelling. The author began posting to the blog in April 2003, and since then has published 3661 posts. Like the majority of blogs, posts remain in the system until deleted by the author (and sometimes longer; see Walker Rettberg 2008: 66). The author includes numerous channels of communication: Videos, written posts and comments, audio files from SoundCloud (a community of user-created music and audio)\(^\text{22}\), and pictures are all included. Links to the author's accounts on various SNS, including Twitter, Facebook, Google +, and LinkedIn, are also provided. Visitors

\(^{22}\) SoundCloud: https://soundcloud.com/
to the blog have the option of sending the author private messages through email (the author’s email address is provided on the site). Anonymous comments are allowed; although the comment form says that “Name” and “Mail” (unpublished) are required (cogdogblog.com), the author posts comments whose authors are identified by a pseudonym or digital identity (i.e. “digitalmaverick”, “pumpkin”). No information was found on whether or not the author filters comments. However, based on the message provided in the sidebar on the blog home page, shown in (4), it is likely that he does so.

(4)
Send those cards and e-letters to [author’s email address] except for requests to post links, guest blog articles, or product reviews. I don’t do that stuff.

(Levine n.d.)

Quoting of previous posts (i.e. in comments) is not automatic; it is possible if the author or commenter chooses to do so.

5.1.2 PREAPrez

PREAPrez (http://preaprez.wordpress.com/) discusses issues related to teacher retirement, especially pensions. As with CogDogBlog, PREAPrez stores posts in the system until deleted by the author. The author has published 5,592 posts since starting the blog in May 2007. He allows anonymous comments and also filters comments (see, i.e., Klonsky 2012a and Klonsky 2012b). In addition he provides a list of “rules” that govern comments, including those in (5) and (6):

(5)
I will publish anonymous comments. However, I encourage people to comment using their name [sic]. I understand why sometimes you can’t.

(Klonsky n.d.)

(6)
I will allow for a little wiggle room when debates get passionate and intense. When people feel strongly about an issue, they will sometimes cross the line. I will allow a limited amount of line crossing.

(Klonsky n.d.)
The author allows private messages via a provided email address. Like *CogDogBlog*, multiple communication channels are included, such as SNS links (Twitter, Facebook, and StumbleUpon), drawings, photographs, and writing (in the form of posts and comments). Quoting text is not automatic, but can be done if the author or commenter chooses to do so.

### 5.1.3 Hack Education

The author of *Hack Education* ([http://hackeducation.com/](http://hackeducation.com/)) publishes posts dealing with educational technology; however, the content is more varied than that of *CogDogBlog*. As with the other selected blogs, *Hack Education* stores posts until they are deleted by the author. Private messaging is possible, via a provided email address. The blog used to allow commenting, including anonymous commenting. However, as of May 16, 2013, the author disabled comments, citing, “…a lack of...time [and] the stomach to moderate and respond. And moderation of comments is absolutely necessary” (Watters 2013). It appears that comments prior to this date were also deleted. She does, however, include numerous links to SNS, such as Facebook, Google+, Quora, Twitter, and Tumblr. As with the other blogs, quoting of previously published posts is possible if the author chooses to do so, but is not automatic.

### 5.1.4 Homeschooling with P.T.

As the name suggests, this blog presents posts on various issues related to homeschooling, more specifically unschooling (Trunk 2013; also see Farenga n.d). Blog posts remain on the blog until they are deleted by the author. Anonymous messaging is allowed; a name is required, but the author publishes comments that have “Anonymous”, “Commenter”, or initials provided in place of a name. Private messaging is also allowed; the author provides not only an email address but also a phone number and physical address. Nothing is mentioned about filtering comments, but the author does mention that she has an editor for the blog (Trunk 2013d). Quoting of previously
posted text is not automatic, but can be done if the author or commenter chooses to do so. Of the blogs, this one provides the fewest channels of communication, including links to just four SNS (Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and Twitter), writing (posts and comments), photographs, and links to articles and videos.

5.1.5 The JLV

The fifth blog, The JLV (http://thejosevilson.com/) is that of a middle school teacher, who publishes posts related to teaching, posts related to family events, and posts about current issues in education. Posts remain on the blog until the author deletes them. He provides capabilities for both anonymous and private messaging. Unlike the other blogs; however, an email address is not provided. Instead, a contact form is provided that allows readers to contact the author directly from the blog. He does not include any information about filtering, but it is likely that comments are filtered, based on the reflective nature of his posts and his awareness of who might be reading his blog. The blog provides several channels of communication, including writing (posts and comments), links to SNS (Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter), a link that allows users to share content to several of these sites from one form, videos, pictures, and links to articles. As with the other blogs, text is not automatically quoted.

5.1.6 Summary of medium factors

The following table summarizes the medium factors for all five of the selected blogs, which were discussed in detail in §5.1.1-5.1.5.
Table 9. Summary of Blog Medium Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CogDogBlog</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hack Education</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeschooling with P.T.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The JLV</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREAPrez</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Analysis Using Gee’s Building Tasks and Theoretical Tools

This section presents the analysis findings from the selected blog posts. The included analysis is in no way exhaustive; it is an initial attempt to apply Gee’s (2005 and 2011) theory of discourse and Big “D” Discourses to blogs. As such, the analysis does not utilize all seven of Gee’s (2005) building tasks (see §4.2.2), nor does it attempt to address all twenty-six questions that make up, in Gee’s (2005) view, an “ideal discourse analysis” (110-113; also see Table D1).

Instead, the analysis examines four of Gee’s tools which were determined to be most relevant to the discussion of both blogs and Discourse use. Each of these tools is presented in its own subsection below, along with examples from the selected blog posts that were introduced in §4.2.3.

5.2.1 Building significance: Situated meanings

As described previously in §3.1.3, situated meaning deals with the significance that a word has in a specific context (Gee 2011: Section 4.2). It can also refer to the range of meanings that topics (subjects) of sentences can have. Further, the choice of where to place the topic can help to identify the situated meaning that a writer is attempting
to convey through a communicative act. The selected blog posts all included numerous examples of both types of situated meanings. Due to the preliminary nature of this study, it is not feasible to discuss all of the situated meanings evidenced in all of the blog posts. The examples presented thus represent a sample of some of the situated meanings contained in the data, and focus on subjects that could be compared across blogs. 23

One such concept is that of school. As these are education blogs, many of the posts discussed school and school-related issues. This is shown in (7) and (8), both from *Homeschooling with P.T.*

(7)

2a. But the truth is that we would have no bullying
2b. if we did not ship kids off to be isolated from the majority of adults for the majority of their days

(Trunk 2013a)

(8)

10. There’s no evidence that says kids should be in school
11. **It’s just a big babysitting service**

(Trunk 2012d)

In (7) and (8) the author uses phrases such as “ship the kids off to be isolated” in line 2b and “just a big babysitting service” in line 11 to convey the ideas that school is a place where kids are passively monitored by adults; the two groups do not interact. The phrases convey that the author associates negative emotions and activities with school, and correspond with her belief that homeschooling is better for kids than traditional school.

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23 When line numbers are included in examples, these refer to the line numbers that were assigned prior to analysis (see §4.3.1); they are not part of the original text of the blog posts.
Likewise, several selected posts from the PREAPrez blog evidence situated meanings for the concept of school, as illustrated by the excerpt in (9):

(9)

27a. From A Nation at Risk to The Race to the Top, the atmosphere in schools and classrooms have [sic] only gotten worse
27b. for both students and teachers
(Klonsky 2012f).

In (9) the author uses both intertextuality and situated meaning to give an opinion on school and two United States-government-designed education reform programs. His syntax conveys the irony that, despite the government’s attempts to improve schools, in his view schools have actually gotten worse. He fronts the dependent clause “from A Nation at Risk to The Race to the Top…”, thereby topicalizing it, which prompts readers to anticipate the contrast shown in the following independent clause, “the atmosphere in schools and classrooms have [sic] only gotten worse.”

School is also a common topic in the blog posts of The JLV. The author’s situated meaning of school is evident in (10):

(10)

14. I believe that schools should work around community solutions and agendas, not demands and complaints from on high
(Vilson 2012c)

The author’s statement of beliefs about what actions schools should take reflects his thoughts about the purpose of school. Namely, that it exists to serve community members and that it should thus work to meet their needs. Additionally, changes to schools should be made with solutions in mind rather than with complaints in mind.

Another common topic that evidenced various situated meanings was that of testing. For example, in The JLV the author dedicates an entire post to state-wide standardized tests, which he titles “An Ode to the Big Tests”. An excerpt from this post, provided in (11), conveys his attitudes toward the phenomenon of testing:
2a. Here’s to the students who will be pelted with Scantron sheets and test booklets emblazoned with the shape of New York State

[...]

4a. Here’s to the students who have different accommodations, whose friends only get 90 minutes of torture a day

4b. when they have to sit there for 120 or 180 minutes, wasting their lives away slowly by the excruciating process

[...]

19a. Here’s to the students who may have in fact learned how to answer the questions on the test,

19b. but still can’t find the length of the hypotenuse or making [sic] a meaningful argument about their passions without prompt

(Vilson 2012a)

Verbs such as “pelted”, “emblazoned”, and “wasting” suggest that the author views the tests as a looming negative presence. Nouns such as “torture”, adverbs such as “slowly” and participles like “excruciating” serve to associate the tests with pain, further adding to the author’s negative representation of them. He also contrasts the tests with such things as “finding the hypotenuse” and “making a meaningful argument about their passions”, thereby implying that these skills are helpful, while tests are not.

PREAPrez also writes about testing, specifically how he feels about people asking him about test scores. Example (12) illustrates this, via an excerpt from a letter that the author wrote to President Obama.

(12)

15a. Now, when I meet people for the first time,

15b. and tell them what I spent my career doing

15c. they often get agitated

16a. They question me about contracts, tenure, pensions

16b. and worst of all, test scores.

24 The use of an ellipsis […] between lines in an example indicates the omission of one or more full lines of material from the original post. This convention is used throughout the presentation of examples in this analysis.
17. Test scores, for goodness sakes.
18. They ask a K-5 Art [sic] teacher about test scores!
   (Klonsky 2012f)

Clearly, the author thinks it is absurd that people are asking him about test scores. This is apparent from line 18, where his use of an exclamation point serves to emphasize that asking an art teacher about test scores is ridiculous. In addition, his use of expressions like “…worst of all, test scores” in line 16b and “for goodness sakes” in line 17 support this attitude, showing his frustration about being asked about test scores. From this, it can be inferred that he feels that tests should not be part of the education experience in an art classroom.

5.2.2 Building significance: Social languages

As mentioned previously (§4.3.2), the idea of social languages refers to the way people use different styles of language to communicate different versions of themselves (Gee 2005, 39). Many examples of the use of different social languages were present in all five blogs. For example, in Homeschooling with P.T. the author uses heteroglossia, writing in the voices of both a parent and an authoritative homeschool educator. Example (13) provides an illustration of the author’s parent voice.

(13)

1. During my last business trip I bought my son a phone.
2. I try to say yes to what they want to buy.
3. I try to trust that they’ll use it for something interesting.
4a. Sometimes it ends up being a waste of money,
4b. but usually not.
[...]
6. The surprise to me was that he started texting the photos to people.
7a. And then he responded to the responses,
7b. and soon he was spending fifteen minutes a day figuring out how to spell.
8. I can’t decide if this is a lot of spelling or not a lot of spelling.
9a. I look at my friends’ kids,
9b. and they’re doing homework all day.
15a. When I'm not confident,
15b. I wonder out loud to myself

16. "What do those school kids do all day?"
17a. How can I possibly believe that my kids are learning enough
17b. when we do no structured learning
17c. and other kids are doing ten hours of structured learning
17d. if you count the homework that even first graders get.
(Trunk 2012a)

The author's use of verbs such as “try” and “can’t decide” show a tone of uncertainty, with a move toward a tone of hope later in the example as evidenced by “am consoled”, “wonder” and “believe”. This tentativeness is quite different from the tone that the majority of her “authoritative homeschool educator” posts show. The excerpts in (14) and (15) provide examples of this voice.

(14)

30. SMATOOS: We run articles on apps for kids with autism and special needs kids.
31. Are there any apps or web programs you’ve found to be especially useful for your son with autism?
32. PT: Those apps are total BS
33. [...]
39a. Any kid with even a close-to-normal IQ is going to ask how to read at some point.
39b. and if the kid’s not asking,
39c. when it comes time to get a job
39d. they [sic] probably shouldn’t get a job that requires reading.
40. They [sic] should work at McDonalds.
(Trunk 2012d)

The excerpt in (14), from an interview that SMATOOS, an educational technology review website, conducted with the author has a much different tone than the extract in
Rather than seeming tentative or indecisive, the author uses verbs such as “should” and adjectives and adverbs such as “total”, “even” and “probably” to express certainty. Although “probably” has a lexical meaning that connotes with uncertainty, in this example the author uses a situated meaning of the word to convey certainty and to contribute a somewhat ironic tone to the statement. Thus, in line 39d the reader interprets the author as saying, “of course they shouldn’t get a job that requires reading”.

In the excerpt in (15), the author extends her situated meaning of school (see §5.2.1) as being a place where nothing useful to the real world is taught (line 15b):

(15)

15a. I’m not sure how to solve the problem
15b. that schools don’t teach anything relevant to life
[…]
17a. We need to start breaking stuff
17b. so we can see things differently
[…]
27. But today is a referendum on killing the system
28a. Walker took huge measures to kill the unions
28b. which is a big step toward killing schools as we know them
[…]
30. I want other states to kill their school unions
(Trunk 2012c)

Verbs such as “need” in lines 16a and 17a and the participle “breaking” also in line 17a convey a sense of urgency and encourage people to take immediate action. The repetition of the verb “kill” in lines 27, 28, and 30 also helps to convey this sense of urgency, as well as communicating the need to take action. By personifying unions and

25 SMATOOS: http://www.smatoos.com/
schools (i.e. “kill the unions”, “killing schools”) the author causes them to seem like monstrous entities that need to be destroyed.

In *CogDogBlog*, the author uses a variety of social languages. In the post “US Airways makes me as a customer feel showered in warmth” (Levine 2013d), the author speaks as a dissatisfied customer and a disgruntled traveler. For example, throughout the post he refers to the airline as “US Failways”, conveying a feeling of dissatisfaction with the airline’s service. The author chooses verbs comparing his actions as a conscientious traveler with the actions of the airline’s customer service representatives as uncaring workers. Furthermore, the author compares the actions of the US Airways customer service representatives with the United Airlines customer service representatives, the airline with which the author had actually booked his flight. This is illustrated in (16).

(16)

15a. By the time I landed at SFO
15b. my flight status app said my connecting flight had left…5 minutes early
[...]
17a. And you know how when you get off the plane
17b. there [sic] usually a gate agent who can tell you where to go and what to do?
18. Nada.
19. There was no one there from US Airways there to assist.
20. Do we go to the gate for the flight we missed? to the ticket counter? to the Fish Market?
21a. I gambled that all the flight statuses were wrong,
21b. and trucked to the international terminal
21c. and rushed through security
21d. and found my plane long gone
[...]
22a. I asked in the United Club
[...]
22c. and some nice ladies looked things up,
22d. but told me they could not change anything
[...]
So I shuffled to the US Airways ticket counter where a rather tired woman wearing the “I so do not love my job face” told me the best she could do, to replace the direct flight from San Francisco to Tokyo. was to book me the next day [...] I thought I would give twitter [sic] a yell and although @USAirways responded quickly with a request to follow [...] I found that all they do os [sic] ask for a flight confirmation and look up info on the web like any monkey can do [...] The first of two complaints I filed shows a classic case of How To Treat Customers Like They Are a Nuisance Messages taught in the business school class, “If You Crap on Customers They Take They [sic] Business Elsewhere” [...] ’cause when my plane landed some 36+ hours later in Tokyo, an ANA agent on the ramp had my name on a sign and told me that my baggage was delayed [...] I have to say that the ANA baggage desk people in Tokyo where [sic] empathetic, thorough, and apologize [sic] profusely for the problem. When I told them I had not [sic] clothes for a business trip and I had been wearing what I was in for 2 days, they offered my [sic] ¥3000 in compensation [...] (Levine 2013d)

The author’s diction portrays him as being responsible and conscientious. For example, he uses verbs such as “trucked”, “rushed”, and “asked” to support the image that he is a customer who has done everything in his control to try to make his flight and fix the situation. He “[gives] Twitter a yell” and “[files]…two complaints”. Unlike the agent
at US Airways who is “rather tired” and “wearing the ‘I so do not love my job face’ and did only “the best she could do”, the agents at United Airlines were “nice ladies”. In addition, when the author arrives at the gate for the missed flight, “there was no one there from US Airways there to assist.” In response to the author’s complaints, he receives responses that “[show] a classic case of How To Treat Customers Like They Are a Nuisance Messages”. However, when the author finally arrives in Tokyo, the “baggage gate people” at ANA airlines are “empathetic and “thorough”; they “apologiz[ed] profusely” and “offered ¥3000 in compensation”.

In order to appeal to the emotions of readers, and likely to appeal to shared experiences with other “disgruntled travelers” the author gives details such as the length of his trip “…I arrived in Tokyo 36+ hours later”, the confusion and frustration he felt about what to do after missing his flight, “do we go to the gate for the flight we missed? to the ticket counter? to the Fish Market?”, and the physical state he was in after arriving at his final destination, “…I had not [sic] clothes for a business trip, and I had been wearing what I was in for 2 days…”

In other blog posts, the author of CogDogBlog employs the social language of “an individual familiar and comfortable with technology”. The author often references technological tools and uses technology-related vocabulary to build this social identity, as seen in (17), which is an excerpt from the transcript of a video that the author put together as an introduction to an online class.

(17)

5a. Anyhow, uh, happy here to be working with Alec on the ETMOOC
6a. It’s been an amazing experience so far...
6b. I’ve been, uh, dabbling a lot
6c. with helping build, uh, some of the websites and especially the blog hub thing.
7a. I’ve been annoying a couple of people about your URLs
10a. I’m gonna sound like an old guy, but uh, a colleague of mine
10c. uh, knew I was dabbling and things on the Internet,
10d. and he just handed me this THING, this floppy disk,
10e. if you remember them, uhhhh…
10f. and he said…
10g. ‘…try this thing called Mosaic’

11b. I haven’t left the Web since then, uhh
11c. I’ve spent some time working for new media consortium…
12c. also teaching, uh, what I think is the most amazing online class called ds106,
digital storytelling

13. but, uh, I just love the Web.
14a. I love the Open Web…

(Levine 2013a)

The author uses terms such as “ETMOOC”, “blog hub”, “URLs”, “Internet”, “floppy
disk”, “Mosaic”, “new media consortium”, “ds106”, “Web”, and “Open Web” to convey
his background in working with technology. He does not provide any explanation of
the terms, perhaps assuming that those taking the class will share a similar technology-
related background, or at the very least be familiar with the terms.

The author also frequently references technology-related concepts in written posts;
Example (18) presents some of those found in a post titled “What is storytelling?”

(18)

5d. …in fact, they [sic] way I frame ds106 for my students
5e. is that I can’t tell them what storytelling is

7b. shifting teaching from an ‘I know this and will transmit it to you’
7c. is way less interesting that [sic] taking a topic or concept and pursuing it
together

8. Gee I feel so rhizomy

28a. I’ve been thurmoing [sic] the drum for 5+ years,
28b. yet one of the most underutilized features of flickr [sic] every teacher can
find a use for
28c. is the ability to annotate an image with hyperlinked popup notes
29. You can go even farther by putting hypertext links on the notes...

[...]

43a. Next I tried something I’ve not done before in Collaborate
43b. I did a screen share
43c. and we did a live run through of pechaflickr, my improv mashup of pecha kucha + PowerPoint Karaoke * random(flickr)

[...]

48a. Thanks to everyone who stepped in front of the firehose,
48b. and apologize [sic] for those whom [sic] spilled Java all over their computers and got locked out

(Levine 2013c)

The author uses a number of terms that reference different uses of technology in this example, including “ds106”, “one of the most under-utilized features of flickr”, “the ability to annotate an image with hyperlinked popup notes”, “putting hypertext links on the notes”, “Something I’ve not done before in Collaborate”, “a screen share”, and “a live run through of pechaflickr, my improv mashup of pecha kucha + PowerPoint Karaoke * random(flickr)”. All of these terms are strongly associated with the social language of technology, more specifically instructional technology. In addition, the author assumes that the audience shares this social language; this is evident by the use of the term “rhizomy” in line 8 and the pun in line 48b. Rhizome is a website that is “dedicated to the creation, presentation, preservation, and critique of emerging artistic practices that engage technology” and that hosts “an online archive of digital art” (Meisburger 2011). The author employs the term “java” in the pun in line 48b to conflate the ideas of overloading and freezing a computer system with applications using this programming language, whose logo happens to be a steaming cup of coffee, with spilling an actual cup of coffee on a computer.

5.2.3 Building connections: Intertextuality

Instances of intertextuality were the most frequently observed feature in the selected blog posts, and were used by all five of the bloggers. This is not surprising,
considering the linked nature of blogs (Blood 2002). The majority of these allusions and references to other sources fit into four general categories: References to religious texts, references to popular culture, references to common trends and concepts in education, technology, or academia, and references to the author’s previous posts. It should be noted that it was often the case that intertextuality and situated meanings (as well as other features) were often combined. The excerpt in (19), from *CogDogBlog*, illustrates an allusion to popular culture:

(19)

16. Oh, flickr [*sic*], I am worried about you.
17. You are getting so old in Internet years.
18. Are you losing it?
19. Please say no.
20. I want no other photo sharing service.
(Levine 2012d)

Two types of intertextuality are evident in (19). First, the extract is from a letter that the author wrote to the photo sharing service Flickr. Rather than being written in the style of a business letter, or a question post to a website, which might be more typical, it is written in the style of a personal letter. In addition, the author personifies Flickr, using expressions such as “are you losing it” in line 18. Line 20, “I want no other photo sharing service” brings to mind a number of songs, such as Elvis Presley’s “Don’t Be Cruel” and The BeeGees’s “If I Can’t Have You”; the relevant lyrics are presented in (20) and (21).

(20)

Don't be cruel to a heart that's true.
I don't want no other love,
Baby it's just you I'm thinking of.
(Blackwell and Presley 1956)

(21)

If I can't have you, I don't want nobody baby
If I can't have you, ah hah hah ah
Specifically, the lines “I don’t want no other love” in Example (20) and “I don’t want nobody baby” in Example (21) reflect the author’s use of intertextuality that was seen in line 20 of Example (19).

The excerpt in (22) presents an example of an allusion to a theory, which hints at the author’s background in academics. The blog post that includes this line describes the author’s attempts to find the citation for a statement printed in an article about the speed of processing images and other visual information compared to the speed of processing text.

(22)
18. I cannot let this go
19a. There is a lesson to be learned here
[...]
20a. I fully believe there is a research paper somewhere
20b. that supports this assertion
[...]
21. So how do I make this happen?
[...]
25. I will try the strength of my weak ties
(Levine 2012c)

The reference in (22) is to sociologist Mark Granovetter’s theory of the strength of weak ties (1973). This theory, which is classified as a form of social network theory, deals with the indirect connections that individuals have. For example, if there are three individuals, A, B, and C, where A and B have a strong tie to one another and A and C have a strong tie to one another, then it is likely that B and C also know one another (1973: 1362-1363). Thus, it is unlikely that, for example, A will be able to provide B or C with any information that either doesn’t already know. Instead, new information will be received from an individual’s weak ties, those people with whom the individual does not regularly interact (Granovetter 1973: 1365).
The JLV also includes many examples of intertextuality, many of which consist of the author writing a post in the style of another work. For example, a portion of The JLV’s post entitled “Some Nights (What We Stand For)” takes the form shown in (23):

(23)


11. I believe listening to them more often without our own agendas often enlightens our work.

12. I believe teaching children, not having an affinity for a particular subject, should inform our work.

13. I believe that teachers who genuinely care about the students enough to both push them academically and understand their obstacles make a great school.

(Vilson 2012c)

Belief statements of a sort are common in the field of education; generally educators are encouraged to craft a short statement that describes their philosophy of education to prepare for both teaching and interviewing. Two examples of teaching philosophy statements are shown in (24):

(24)

I believe that each child is a unique individual who needs a secure, caring and stimulating atmosphere in which to grow and mature emotionally…

I believe each and every child has the potential to bring something unique and special to the world…

(Cohen & Gelbrich 1999)

The style in which the post in (23) is written also brings to mind the form of religious creeds, especially those used in the Christian church, such as the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. Both of these creeds follow a similar format as the post shown above; compare the form of (23) and (24) with that of (25):

(25)

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty…

3. I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son…

17a. I believe in the Holy Spirit…

(Encyclopædia Britannica Online n.d.)
Hack Education also evidences the use of intertextuality. However, it tends to take a different form from that shown in CogDogBlog or The JLV. Whereas CogDogBlog tends to reference ideas indirectly and The JLV tends to use the form of other sources, Hack Education tends to directly reference sources. In the post “Ed-Tech as MacGuffin” (Watters 2013a) the author compares educational technology tools to a device that Alfred Hitchcock used in his films; an excerpt from this post is given in (26).

(26)


2. Described like this, education technology sure begins to feel rather Hitchcockian

12. The **MacGuffin**, of course, was a term popularized by Hitchcock to describe the suspense techniques in his films.

13a. Among of [sic] the best known examples: the $40,000 that Janet Leigh’s character steals in Psycho

13b. the spare key to the apartment in Dial M for Murder

(Watters 2012a)

In (26) the author makes a direct connection between educational technology and Hitchcock’s use of what he terms the MacGuffin. The excerpt does contain a more indirect type of intertextuality, seen in line 1, where the author presents a series of one-word statements, each of which (except for the first) is a hyperlink that connects to an article about educational technology. However, each of the statements could be loosely connected with one of Hitchcock’s films as well. Despite this, the bulk of the selection makes use of direct reference to establish intertextuality.

In *Homeschooling with P.T.*, the author often uses intertextuality to reference previous posts and to link to articles, videos, and other items. The post “The art of teaching perseverance” includes references to two of the author’s previous posts; excerpts from the post are shown in (27). The text in bold indicates hyperlinks.

(27)

1a. **The post I published yesterday**

1b. was the first post in six years of blogging
1c. that generated only one comment...
2a. I was lucky enough to start blogging
2b. when there were very few bloggers
2c. and almost none blogging with **my main topic, careers**.
(Trunk 2012b)

In line 1a, the author both references a previous post and links back to it via a hyperlink in the actual post. Likewise, the bolded portion of the line in 2c, “my main topic, careers” links to the most recent post on the author’s other blog, which provides career advice. These cross-reference links make it so the author does not have to include additional explanation of the topic of the previous post or the content of the other blog.

The author also frequently includes links to outside sources as a way of providing support for arguments or providing tools for readers. The excerpt in (28) shows examples of these links, which are indicated by the text in bold.

(28)

17a. **Visual people are terrible listeners**
17b. because they learn by looking and listening just annoys them
18. **People who learn by doing** have very few outlets at school
25a. **Here’s a really good, free version of the Myers Briggs test**
25b. that you might be able to take for your child
(Trunk 2012f)

The link in line 17a leads to a page describing key features of the visual learning style from the site learning-styles-online.com. The links in lines 18 and 25a both lead to different pages on the Type Coach website (type-coach.com), which provides resources for users to learn about Myers Briggs personality types, including the free test that the author cites.

Other blog authors also include direct links to outside sources. However, all of the bloggers whose posts were analyzed tend to include links much less frequently than perhaps might be expected, especially considering that the blog originated as a link-driven form of writing. Including cross-reference links, the *Hack Education* blog linked
to other material most frequently, averaging 15 links per post over the course of the year. *CogDogBlog* averaged 9 links per post, *Homeschooling with P.T.* 7 links per post, and *The JLV* averaged 2 links per post. *PREAPrez* linked to other material most infrequently, including an average of only 1 link per post.

While not including frequent links, *PREAPrez* often used a type of intertextuality not found in the other blogs. The author has a regular blog feature called “Ten minute drawings”. These are drawn by the author and fit into the genre of political cartoons, being not only humorous but also providing the author’s opinion on current events and politicians (Library of Congress, n.d.). The subject of these drawings is usually a politician, accompanied by a caption and other text.

Figure 4 shows one of these drawings, which refers to the policies that the school system has put in place to aid non-union teachers in supervising a class in the event of a union teacher strike; the author discussed these policies in detail in a previous post (Klonsky 2012c). The drawing summarizes the instructions that the non-union teachers receive prior to supervising students.

---

> 26 See the website www.politicalcartoons.com for a large database of political cartoons.
Figure 4. Rahm Emanuel’s Teaching Manual (*Preaprez* 2012d)

The drawing not only provides information about some of the instructions provided by the school system, but also communicates *PREAPrez*’s attitude toward the policies. The author clearly has a negative opinion of the policies, and Rahm Emanuel as well, based on the content of the drawing. For example, the statement “Be a great teacher in 10 easy steps” and the picture of Emanuel sticking his tongue out and thumbing his nose at an unknown audience, perhaps union teachers, convey that *PREAPrez* views both the policies and the politician as ridiculous. Likewise, Emanuel’s gesture in the drawing illustrates his lack of respect, presumably, according to *PREAPrez*, for union teachers. Furthermore, the image is reminiscent of a cover of a how-to book, not in terms of style, but in terms of content. Possibly, the creator envisions this as the cover of the policy document that non-union teachers receive prior to entering the classroom. The statement “So easy a hedge fund manager could do it”, in the bottom left corner of the drawing, also provides commentary on the author’s view of individuals in this profession, likely alluding to Emanuel’s prior career as a banker, which he entered without prior experience. (Sanati & Ross 2008).
5.2.4 Building identities: Big “D” Discourses

By examining the bloggers’ use of situated meanings, social languages, and intertextuality, some conclusions can be drawn about the types of Discourses that they are acting out. Naturally, since only three factors were considered, these conclusions should be viewed as preliminary; a more complete analysis of the bloggers’ work would likely provide additional information about the Discourses. Furthermore, the list of the Discourses in each blog is in no way exhaustive; it is meant to provide a small sample of the many Discourses that are present. Due to the interrelated nature among Discourses and situated meanings, social languages, and intertextuality, most of the Discourses have already been suggested in the preceding discussion in §5.2.1-5.2.3.

The primary Discourse seen in CogDogBlog is that of a “techie”. The author makes numerous references to different technology tools within posts, and includes links to not only personal social network sites and other created blogs and websites, but also to tools that he has designed, such as the CC Attribution Helper, a browser script designed to add attribution to Flickr pages where users have included images shared under a creative commons license, an old project titled “Even Older HyperCard Stuff” which the author created with, as the name suggests, HyperCard, an application program with a scripting language that did not require a great deal of programming background to use (Lasar 2012). These elements, along with the design of the blog, shown in Figure 5, support this “techie” Discourse.
Figure 5. A Post from *CogDogBlog* (http://cogdogblog.com/8855)

The excerpt in (29) provides a representative example of a post using this primary “techie” Discourse.

(29)

15a. Well I don’t consult for all those big named badge companies,
15b. but I figured out an attribution solution in about 35 minutes
16a. I am working on a new Feed WordPress powered site
16b. where we are pulling all of the source content into the site…
16c. but I wanted to provide attribution back to the original source […]
19. You see FeedWordPress provides the source name, link, and permalink as post meta data.

20a. It takes but a whiff of PHP
20b. to put that on any template.

21. Here you go, here comes the money code:

```
<?php
if (get_post_meta($post->ID, 'syndication_permalink', true)){
    echo '<hr /This was <a href="'.get_post_meta($post->ID, 'syndication_permalink', true).'">originally published</a> at
    <a href="'.get_post_meta($post->ID, 'syndication_source_url', true).'">
    '.'written to be syndicated</a>. 
    ';
} // if we are syndicated
```

(Levine 2012e)

The author's use of phrases such as “You see FeedWordPress provides the source name, link, and permalink as post meta data”, “It takes but a whiff of PHP to put that on any template”, and the inclusion of the portion of code, all work together to support the author's “techie” Discourse. Other posts also provide examples of this primary Discourse, such as those that contain Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) images created by the author. One of these is the post from March 26, 2013 titled “Make two GIFs and blog me in the morning”. In this post, the author describes the process of making the GIF that is displayed at the top of the entry. An excerpt from the post is provided in (30):

(30)

7. I added the text layer in frame 11.
8a. By default Photoshop makes it visible in all frames,
8b. so I selected frames 1-4 in the animation window,
8c. and then de-activated the visible button in the frames layer.
9a. I nudged the text upward,
9b. and added the Outer Glow layer effects—
9c. this only affects the one frame,
9d. so to make it match,
9e. I make the text frame active in the layers,
9f. select frames 11-15 in animation,
9g. and from the animation window palette, select Match Frame Across Layers.
From the way that the author describes the process of creating the GIF, it is clear that he is very comfortable with video editing software. He uses many words and phrases that have technology-related situated meanings, such as “text layer”, “frame”, “selected frames”, “layer effects”, “make the text frame active in the layers”, and “the animation window palette”. A basic understanding of technology is necessary to correctly interpret the situated meanings.

In addition to this primary Discourse, CogDogBlog also includes several secondary Discourses. One of these, discussed in §5.2.2, is that of the “disgruntled traveler” and “dissatisfied customer”. As this Discourse was previously discussed at length, it will not be discussed further at this point. Another secondary Discourse that was not discussed previously is that of “a dog owner”. That the author obviously likes dogs is evidenced by both the dog theme of the blog and the blog posts written about dogs or containing images of dogs. Not only does the blog feature a picture of one of the author’s dogs in the header (see Figure 5) and the name CogDogBlog, the majority of other search functions also feature dog-themed names. For example, the search box is labeled “dig for it”, a list of recent posts is titled “recent barks ‘n howls”, a box linking to SNS is titled “social dog”, and the listing of archived posts is called “buried toys”.

In addition, the author occasionally writes posts about his dogs and, more frequently, includes images of dogs within other posts. The excerpt in (31) serves as an example of a post about the author’s dogs; in this case the author is talking about a Google Calendar alert that had reminded him of the date of the dog’s death.

(31)
6. That photo was him as a puppy, and me with a lot less years and miles on me.
   […]
8a. He was a birthday surprise,
8b. intended as a frisbee [sic] chasing classic labrador [sic]
   […]
10a. He was a bridge dog for our canine family tree;
10b. we had him and Fudge at the same time

13a. As rational as I can be in the math,
13b. it can still baffle me that we humans can have our short time span on this blue marble,
13c. but still live through 5? 7? 10? generations of pets

24a. Here’s to you little buddy,
24b. that little white dog who never quite was what I thought he would be,
24c. meaning he was who he thought he should be—
(Levine 2012a)

Unlike the posts in the blog’s primary “techie” Discourse, this post contains no references to technology besides that made to Google Calendar. Even this reference is different, as the purpose of making the reference is to frame the discussion that follows about the author’s dog. This post contains no scripting code or GIFs, nor does it include any links to other material. Rather, the post is almost entirely writing, split up with three photographs of the dog. The tone of the post is also different, being contemplative rather than instructive, as was the post excerpt in (30).

In *Hack Education*, the majority of posts evidence the primary Discourse of an “educational technology (ed-tech) expert”. The name of the blog likely comes from the idea of “life hacking”, a term and phenomenon that originated from computer programming. Life hacking refers to “a strategy or technique adopted in order to manage one’s time and daily activities in a more efficient way” (Oxford Dictionary 2013); in brief, a work-around or shortcut. The author of the *Hack Education* blog writes that “to ‘hack education’…has multiple interpretations: a technological solution, a technology intrusion, a technological possibility, a technological disaster” (Watters 2013). In the blog, the author addresses all of these interpretations. The majority of posts contain multiple references to different ed-tech tools. For example, in a “*Hack Education* weekly news” post from September 7, 2012 titled “Big funding for Desire2Learn, Big Fail for School of One” the author discusses many different ed-tech
companies and happenings. Example (32) provides an excerpt from this post; bold text indicates the text that was hyperlinked in the original.

(32)

10a. The Estonian Tiger Leap Foundation launched a new program called “ProgeTiger”

10b. aimed at teaching computer programming to all kids from grades 1 through 12

[...]

12. Low-cost Linux computer-maker Raspberry Pi announced plans for version 2.0 of its boards.

[...]

14. Digital textbook app-maker Inkling made available a set of O’Reilly Media books this week.

15. The learn-to-program guides include an interactive coding widget

16. As will all the O’Reilly books, it’s hard to not make a purchasing decision based on the animal on the cover.

17. So hey, it looks like I’m gonna learn JavaScript!

(Watters 2012c)

The presentation of this information indicates that the author is familiar with all of the various ed-tech tools that are introduced. For example, line 16, “as with all the O’Reilly books, it’s hard not to make a purchasing decision based on the animal on the cover” indicates that the author has seen books from this series before, and has likely purchased one or more of them. Also, in line 12 the author discusses a computer running the Linux operating system; Linux is not as familiar to the general population as the Windows and OS X operating systems.

In addition to numerous posts similar to that in (32, the author publishes many entries that offer in-depth coverage on any given ed-tech tool. Some post titles include, “The Case for a Campus Makerspace” (Watters 2013a), “Facebook Groups for .EDU [Storified]” (Watters 2012b), and “Learning Experiences: The Tin Can API” (Watters 2012e). Example (33) presents an excerpt from the “…Tin Can API” post. Text in bold indicates hyperlinks.
8. “Susie read Chapter 2”
9. “Susie”—her name, grade level, and enrollment details—fits in the Student Information System
10a. “Chapter 2”—or whatever the “object of study” might be—
10b. is delivered by educational content providers—
[...]
11a. There’s a verb in that sentence, sure
11b. but up ‘til now, “actions” haven’t been the focus of LMSes, publishers, and the like
[...]
13a. The Tin Can API—currently being shepherded by ADL the keepers of the SCORM (the Sharable Content Object Reference Model project)—hopes to provide education technologies
13b. with more flexibility to account for the actions and processes and experiences,
13c. by instrumentalizing that entire statement: subject-verb-object
[...]
32a. I’m intrigued by the Tin Can API for a number of reasons:
33. It is open and distributed.
34. It supports interoperability
[...]
36. It’s a Web API
37a. (I’ve written previously about the importance of education APIs.
37b. and I think the Tin Can API could be very useful [sic] tool here...
(Watters 2012e)

Like the posts on CogDogBlog, and the post excerpted in (32, in Example (33) the author includes several terms that demonstrate familiarity with technology, such as “LMS”, “API”, “ADL”, “SCORM” and other phrases with situated meanings related to technology: “open and distributed” and “supports interoperability”. Unlike CogDogBlog, though, Hack Education is classified as a Discourse of “ed-tech expert” rather than as one of “techie” due to including reviews of the tools described, such as that in lines 32a-37b in (33).
In addition to this primary Discourse, *Hack Education* also evidences the secondary Discourse of “supportive parent”. This Discourse is seen in the excerpt in (34) from the October 2, 2012 post, “Enlisted”.

(34)

1a. I have chronicled my son’s **graduation from high school**
1b. his opting **not to go to college**
1c. his struggles to find work with no job history and no university diploma
2a. But the decision he’s made for “what next”—
2b. he enlisted in the U.S. Army today—
2c. feels too personal
2d. and my reactions too raw for me to write about here on this site
[...]
4. I do want to say this:
5. I think that we are making a grave mistake by corralling all our children into college
[...]
8e. I simply do not think that college is the right choice for everyone
[...]
10a. We need to give kids the opportunity to learn a trade
[...]
13a. We need to encourage children to take the reins of their own learning
13c. and recognize that it needn’t happen in a classroom
(Watters 2012d)

Although her son’s decision is difficult for her, as evidenced by phrases such as “feels too personal” and “reactions too raw” in lines 2c and 2d, ultimately, the author is supportive of his decision. For example, in line 5 she writes, “I think that we are making a grave mistake by corralling all our children into college” and in line 8e she states, “I simply do not think that college is the right choice for everyone”. Toward the end of the post, the author writes, “[w]e need to encourage children to take the reins of their own learning”, perhaps suggesting that this is what she feels her son is doing by enlisting in the US Army.
In *Homeschooling with P.T.* two primary, but closely related, Discourses are present. The first is that of “homeschool parent” and the second is that of “homeschool educator”. The author’s “homeschool parent” Discourse tends to be more reflective than that of the “homeschool educator”, involving musings about whether she is making the correct choices in regards to, for example, education or rules. The example in (35) provides an excerpt from a post published on February 26, 2013 titled “Five ways to tell if your kid should go to college” that illustrates both of these Discourses. Text in bold indicates hyperlinks.

(35)

1. Despite knowing that college is an outdated rip off, I am still stuck on the idea that my kids will go to college.
2a. My kids are young enough that I continue to live in a fantasy land
2b. that they will go to one of the small handful of colleges that the majority of powerful people attend.
3. This is a terrible line of thinking for a lot of reasons
   […]
6a. And I write these posts to convince myself as much as I want to convince you
6b. that college is a waste of time and money for most everyone
   […]
13. Is your kid too stupid to pick up interesting material without being told?
14a. And if you want to read the Iliad [sic] because you love to learn, then great
14b. you can do it on your own time
15. But if you didn't choose to read the Iliad [sic] in your free time when you were fifteen, you probably don't want to do it when you're eighteen
   […]
17a. So be honest:
17b. Your kid doesn’t care about the Iliad [sic] or, probably, the rest of that liberal arts education
   […]
20. If you didn’t learn about it before college,
20b. you probably have no drive to learn about it

(Trunk 2013b)
The first few lines in (35) illustrate the “homeschool parent” Discourse. For example, the phrase in line 1, “I am still stuck on the idea that my kids will go to college” shows that the author is concerned about the future of her children. She wants them to be successful and, as illustrated in line 2b, powerful. In lines 6a-6b, the author notes that she, “write[s] these posts to convince myself as much as I want to convince you”, showing that she wants to reassure herself about her belief that college is a waste of time. The second half of the excerpt, beginning with line 13, illustrates the “homeschool educator” Discourse. Whereas in the beginning of the post the author expresses uncertainty (lines 6a-6b) and speaks of her desires for her children (lines 1-2b), in the second half of the excerpt she conveys certainty and strongly expresses the beliefs that she has about college. For example, in line 13 she presents the rather harshly phrased question, “Is your kid too stupid to pick up interesting material without being told?” In lines 17a and 17b she puts forth the decisive statement, “So be honest. Your kid doesn’t care about the Iliad [sic] or, probably, the rest of that liberal arts education.”

In addition to the primary Discourses of “homeschool parent” and “homeschool educator”, some posts on Homeschooling with P.T. also show the secondary Discourse of “career advisor”. This Discourse is evidenced in the excerpts in (36) and (37).

(36)

39. School rewards behaviors that lead to unemployment
42a. Renegade thinking is what investors look for in the startup community
42b. and indomitable drive to lead is what big companies look for in key employees
43. Neither of these traits are [sic] encouraged in school
44a. And in fact, the sense that you will always succeed by showing up and doing what you’re told, is the very attitude that puts you first on the chopping block for layoffs

(Trunk 2013c)
7. And I’ve had to really adjust my worklife in order to accommodate homeschooling.

8. Just a few years ago I was delivering dozens of speeches each year for $15K a pop.

[...]

16a. But still, I was gearing up to do another startup
16b. until I realized that I was going to have to homeschool
[...]

23a. The key for me was being able to dream up career ideas for myself
23b. that work well with homeschooling the kids
[...]

30. Everyone has things they are good at they think they will not do.
31. No one is good at only one thing.

(Trunk 2012e)

In (36) the author speaks authoritatively about the traits that make a person employable versus those that make a person unemployable. For example, the author writes that, “renegade thinking is what investors look for in the startup community” and links to a New York Times article related to the topic.27 In (37), she provides concrete steps that she has taken to combine work with homeschooling that can serve as suggestions for other individuals who are trying to do the same. Lines 23a-23b provide one such example stating, “The key for me was being able to dream up career ideas for myself that work well with homeschooling the kids.” Meanwhile, lines 30-31 give encouragement for those who might be hesitant to begin homeschooling due to the type of career that they had previously: “Everyone has things they are good at that they think they will not do. No one is good at only one thing.”

Like both Homeschooling with P.T., Hack Education, and CogDogBlog, The JLV also employs the use of multiple Discourses. The author’s primary Discourse is that of...

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“caring teacher who puts students first”. This Discourse is evident in the post “A quick note on student voice [Because you need to hear it...again]” from February 7, 2013, excerpted in (38).

(38)
6b. I thought I would have to do my first intervention of the year between student and teacher to get to the truth
7a. Yesterday, during one of my breaks, the student ambassador came to me
7b. and said he had a discussion with the teacher afterward,
7c. which he prompted
8. The student resolved the situation with the teacher on his own.
[...]
10a. Moral Of The Story:
10b. Believe it or not, your job isn’t about you
11. It’s not about any of us, really
12a. We’re allowed to ask for things
12b. that allow us to do the best job possible: reasonable salaries, job security, and good professional relationships with our colleagues and supervisors
[...]
15a. Yet, every moment educators step into a classroom...
15b. we gave the obligation to put our best foot forward by taking a few steps back... and let the kids talk
16. Unfortunately, too many adults, educators included, still see themselves as the primary foci of all their endeavors
[...]
17a. They don’t bestow lessons on children because they ought to learn,
17b. but because their students’ learning is a reflection of their own awesomeness,
[...]
21a. Rather than constantly finding ways to manipulate kids in ways that don’t help them,
21b. let’s teach them how to advocate for themselves in times when they don’t have an adult to back them up immediately...
(Vilson 2013)

In (38) the author compares how teachers should behave with how they sometimes actually behave. The phrase “believe it or not” used in line 10b suggests that this is a fact that teachers should already know and thus something that should not be
revolutionary. Words like “unfortunately” and “still” in line 16 introduce the comparison to the inappropriate behaviors that some teachers exhibit. The focus of the post is on how teachers should respond in relation to students; this is stressed by the repetition of words such as “kids”, “students”, and “children”. The author also chooses verbs with negative connotations such as “manipulate”, in 21a, to describe the inappropriate behaviors of teachers, which are then contrasted with verbs with positive connotations such as “advocate”, in 21b, to describe appropriate behaviors.

In addition to this primary Discourse, The JLV also includes a secondary Discourse of “new father”, evidenced in the selection from the post “For the person that I do have” in (39).

(39)
14a. Outwardly, I had told people that we needed to redefine fatherhood,
14b. but inwardly, I didn’t know what that meant
15. The plethora of advice from present [sic] poured in first like a drip, then a waterfall
[...]
17a. I read a lot, researched a lot,
17b. and contemplated a lot on the type of father I wanted to project
[...]
19a. I didn’t know what to do,
19b. and, for the first time, that helped
[...]
25a. He’s changed my life immeasurably
25b. and I would never trade this for anything
26a. When I was younger, I disliked Father’s Day
26b. because of the things I did not have
27. Recently, I’ve learned to love Father’s Day for the things I do
28a. He’s put his little feet squarely in the holes in my heart,
28b. and I can feel them slowly healing
(Vilson 2012b)

Such phrases as “I read a lot, researched a lot” and “I didn’t know what to do, and for the first time, that helped” convey experiences that are likely common to many new
parents, as does “contemplated a lot on the type of father I wanted to project”. Many new parents want to make deliberate decisions about how to raise their children, especially in terms of what they want to do differently from how they were raised. Likewise, the author evidences a change in attitude and lifestyle as a result of having a child, saying “he’s changed my life immeasurably” and “When I was younger, I disliked Father’s Day because of the things I did not have. Recently, I’ve learned to love Father’s Day for the things I do.”

All four of the blogs previously discussed evidence multiple Discourses, as does the final blog, PREAPrez. The primary Discourse of PREAPrez is that of “politically active retired union educator”; this Discourse is evident in numerous posts, including the passage in (40) from the post titled, “My lunch with Illinois Representative Elaine Nekritz didn’t go well”.

(40)

1. The afternoon CTU rally yesterday was scheduled downtown at the Hyatt Regency at 3:00
[...]
3. I wanted to attend at least part of the...Retired Teacher Association luncheon scheduled for noon
[...]
5. When I arrived I discovered that I had been seated between Democratic House Representative Elaine Nekritz and Republican Representative Rosemary Mulligan
[...]
10. I promised myself to behave
11a. Even though she has been horrible on the pension issue,
11b. I promised myself to be polite and cordial.
[...]
24. Then the conversation shifted to the Chicago teacher strike
25. “You did that when you voted for Senate Bill 7, I said
26. What happened to the promise I made?
27. That wasn’t very polite.
[...]
35. “And then your support for the COLA-TRIP choice”
36. By this time she was probably wishing I was on my way.
37. “You tell me how I’m going to get enough votes for a graduated tax system”, she said
38. “You tell me how you’re going to get enough votes for your plans to cut benefits”
39a. “You’ve been at it for four years
39b. and you haven’t been able to do it
40a. If you had spent that time on changing the revenue system, who knows?”
[…]
42. “But let me tell you this,” I said.
43. “You have ruptured the traditional alliance between the Democratic Party in this state and the public sector unions.
44. You did it at your peril
45. There will be a cost for what you are doing”
(Klonsky 2012e)

The entire post references a political event that PREAPrez attended, showing that the author is not only aware of political issues but views involvement in politics as being important. In addition, the author references several recent (at the time of the post) political issues relevant to retired teachers, such as “Senate Bill 7”, “the COLA-TRIP choice”, “the traditional alliance between the Democratic Party…and the public sector unions”, illustrating his political knowledge. Not only is the author aware of what is happening in politics, he is also confident enough about the issues to discuss them with a politician and to challenge her on her political decisions.

In addition to PREAPrez’s primary Discourse of “politically active retired union educator” the secondary Discourse of “opinionated art teacher” is also present. A portion of the post “Seasonals” in (41) provides a sample of this Discourse.

(41)
4a. When I first was hired as a K-6 art teacher
4b. I was warned by my boss, the administrator in charge of Art [sic] teachers, not to make “seasonals”
5. Nothing special for Halloween. No Valentines.
11. And certainly not holiday ornaments
12a. *That was okay for the classroom teacher*
12b. she warned me
13. But we needed to be serious about our art curriculum
17. After a few years the *administrator in charge of Art [sic] teachers* retired
18a. The board of education saw an opportunity to do some cost savings
18b. and did not replace her
19a. A teacher took over the job of part-time curriculum specialist
19b. which came with some release time and a stipend
20. And no authority to keep me from making “seasonals”
21. That first year I went wild
22. …an Art teacher in another building and I conspired to fill the three weeks of December before winter break with every holiday project we could come up with
31. It was our first and last Martha Stewart Christmas
32. We calmed down after that
34. But for that one brief moment it did feel like liberation
(Klonsky 2012g) [Italics in original]

The author’s opinion of the “administrator in charge of art teachers” and her instructions about the art curriculum is clear from this post. For example, the use of staccato sentences in lines 5-7 and the exaggerated negative expressions “forget about it” “never”, and “nothing” convey that the author thinks this administrator’s policy about “seasonal” art projects is absurd. In addition, referring to the administrator as “the administrator in charge of art teachers” and emphasizing this title with italics (present in the original post) suggests that PREAPrez thinks this administrator views herself as being more important than she actually is, and that she acts like she has more power than she actually does. This is further supported by lines 18a-18b: “The board of education saw an opportunity to do some cost savings and did not replace her”, which
reflects that, like PREAPrez, the board did not think that this administrator’s role was important to the functioning of the school.

5.3 Summary of Findings

While all five blogs contained similar medium factors, as discussed in Chapter 5, and all of the bloggers used Gee’s theoretical tools of situated meanings, social languages, intertextuality, and Discourses (Gee 2011, Chapter 4), each chose to use these tools in different ways. For example, the bloggers all used intertextuality, but each blogger used varied types of intertextuality. The JLV borrowed the form and style of different writings to present original content. CogDogBlog alluded to theories and popular culture, while Hack Education directly referenced other works, Homeschooling with P.T. linked to articles and cross-referenced previous posts, and PREAPrez cited political decisions and politicians in drawings. The bloggers all used different social languages, from that of a homeschool educator, to that of an irritated traveler. Situated meanings of terms such as “school”, “testing” and other education-related topics were common as well. Finally, examining how all of these features worked together provided information about the various Discourses that the bloggers were performing, from that of a “techie”, to that of “new father”, to that of “politically active retired union educator”.

The final chapter of this paper, Chapter 6, builds connections among Discourses, discourses, and perceived trends in literacy and society, especially in regards to how the many new communication technologies trace their roots to blogging. Compared to these new technologies, blogging seems almost quaint, and the capabilities for communication and expression seem rather limited. Despite this, as discussed in §5.2, the blogs evidenced numerous social languages, intertextual references, and Discourses. Considering the increased affordances of newer technologies, it is likely that they will show a greater number of Discourses and more types of Discourse features.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERACY

6.1 Convergence and Divergence of Web 2.0 Tools

Some see blogging as passé in the world of Web 2.0 tools. For example, Marc Tracy (2013) writes about the “death of blogging” saying that “we will still have blogs, of course, if only because the word is flexible enough to encompass a very wide range of publishing platforms: Basically, anything that contains a scrollable stream of posts is a ‘blog.’ What we are losing is the personal blog and the themed blog” (Tracy 2013: para. 6). He feels that this is the case because readers no longer “have the patience for a certain writer or even certain subject matter. Instead, they use social media to efficiently pick exactly what they do and do not click on…” (Tracy 2013: para. 6).

However, Warren Ellis (2010), a writer for Wired magazine, disagrees that the form of the blog is dying, saying, “when any medium starts getting ‘the death of…’ articles, it doesn’t mean the medium in question is dying, so much as that people are bored with it and are looking for the next thing” (2010: para 3).

Many options are now available to fulfill this desire for “the next thing.” Web technologies appear to be moving in two disparate directions, evidencing both convergence and divergence of mediums. §6.1.1 examines how media are converging, evidenced by the wide variety of social networking sites currently available, while
§6.1.2 describes how media are diverging, evidenced by sites with one purpose or that primarily utilize a single medium.

6.1.1 Convergence: SNS

Social networking sites (SNS), as the name implies, attempt to recreate the social networks that are found in the physical world. Facebook, one of the most well-known (and most widely used) SNS (Brett 2013), allows users to “friend” one another and to affiliate with causes, companies, and to show interests by “liking” the page for the relevant item.28 Users can join together via Facebook groups to proclaim, “If you remember this you grew up in the 90’s”, “I want to punch slow walking people in the back of the head”, or “We hate the new Facebook, so STOP CHANGING IT!” (Smith 2009). This new way of interacting with content suggests a new layer of Discourse features: Individuals will be able to craft Discourses using group affiliations and “likes”.

Recently, SNS are beginning to move away from the Facebook model, where users form small networks within the broad, general Facebook network, to a model known as “niche social networking” (Nick 2013). One such site, Sgroups, allows users to organize their contacts into categories based on real-world networks, such as work, family, and friends (Nick 2013)29. This function is similar to the “circles” on the SNS Google+ (Google 2013)30. The circle model of Google+ lends itself to a comparative study of an individual’s Discourse use in different settings, which are represented in these SNS by different circles. Sgroups also allows users to collaborate on documents, store and share files on the cloud, and integrate other sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The site also takes pride in its “unprecedented privacy controls” (Nick 2013).

28 Facebook homepage: https://facebook.com/
29 Sgroups homepage: https://sgroups.com/
30 Google+ homepage: https://plus.google.com/
Social networks are also expanding to mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. While applications are already available for users to access Facebook and other Internet sites on mobile devices, these new networks are specifically designed for mobile platforms. In addition, these networks, termed social-local-mobile (SoLoMo) not only allow users to connect via their smartphones and tablets, but also take advantage of the GPS capabilities of these devices to allow users to connect with other SoLoMo users in the same physical area (Nick 2013).

6.1.2 Divergence: Single-purpose sites

While sites like Facebook and MySpace seek to combine all the functions of blogging, chatting, emailing, and video and photo sharing on one central site, numerous other sites seek to separate these, and other, functions. For example, the sites Flickr, Instagram, and Photobucket, among many more, allow users to share photographs, either publicly or privately. Some sites such as SmugMug also allow users to buy and sell photos from one another. Likewise, Glogster’s website promotes the glog as a “graphic blog”, allowing users to create a scrapbook-like page with pictures, video, audio, and writing. Pinterest allows the creation of online bulletin boards; other users can then share the images with each other. Most of these are themed collections of images from around the Web, such as recipes, clothing from a particular retailer, or wedding and event ideas. This site mainly appeals to women, with market research studies estimating that 70% of the users are female (Breikss 2012). Seeing an

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32 SmugMug: http://smugmug.com
33 Glogster: http://www.glogster.com/
34 Pinterest: https://pinterest.com/
opportunity for a new niche market, developers have since created sites such as Manteresting, Gentlemint, and Dudepins (Parrack 2013). Like Pinterest, these sites all rely on graphics, containing very little to no writing. However, unlike Pinterest, these sites are targeted at men. These various photo sharing sites allow for the study of yet another facet of Discourse: What types of Discourses will individuals create with images? How will users integrate these image-based Discourses with those used on their blogs or SNS?

Other sites seek to combine the appeal of blogging and social networking with the attraction of a limited time commitment. Perhaps the most well-known is the microblogging site Twitter. This site, created by Evan Williams, one of Blogger’s founders (Rosenberg 2009), allows users to share their thoughts without the commitment that actual blogging requires: Posts are limited to 140 characters. Rosenberg writes that “Twitter [is] like blogging, only shorter. The 140-character limit [is] unforgiving...but it provide[s] some guarantee that keeping up with your friends [will] not take over your life” (2009: 334). Like blogs and SNS, Twitter allows the option of making content public or private.

More recently, Williams has created a new microblogging site called Medium, which is still in beta version. Unlike Twitter, posts are not limited to 140 characters. In the “About” page of the site, Williams describes Medium as “a beautiful space for reading and writing—and little else. The words are central. They can be accompanied by images...but there are no gratuitous sidebars, plug-ins, or widgets. There is nothing to set up or customize” (Williams 2012: Item 1). Medium is Williams’s attempt to help

36 Twitter: https://twitter.com/
37 Medium: https://medium.com/
people sort through the massive amounts of data on the Internet so that “content reaches its right audience...more quickly and efficiently than it would on isolated islands on the Web—no matter who it’s from” (Williams 2012: Item 2). Will Discourses used on sites such as Medium show more introspection than those used on Twitter? How will individuals accustomed to communicating Discourses through images adjust to creating Discourses only with words?

6.2 Web 3.0?

6.2.1 From a Web of documents to a Web of data

Some recognized that life on the Internet was “just an added dimension in the lives of many people” (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic 2004: 30) even before Facebook, Google+ and similar sites were common. Researchers speculate that Web 3.0 will result in yet another step toward merging the virtual with the physical (Peters 2012). The details of how this will occur are not yet known; however, most think that it will involve mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets accompanied by the GPS technologies already included on these devices.

Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the term “Web 2.0”, is also credited with coining the term Web 3.0. Berners-Lee envisioned Web 3.0 as a “Semantic Web” that would be a “web of data” rather than a “web of documents” (World Wide Web Consortium [W3C] 2012). Berners-Lee envisions Web 3.0 as a way of equipping computers with the tools needed to help them do more useful work. Such features as the resource description framework (RDF) and the accompanying query language SPARQL are some of the tools that the World Wide Web Consortium is working on to aid the development of Web 3.0 (W3C 2012).

In addition, others have noted that Web 3.0 will move from the read/write features of Web 2.0 to those of a portable personal web. Along with this, Aghaei, Nematbakhsh,
& Farsani (2012) predict a move from communities on the Web to individuals on the Web. This is evident in the new SoLoMo social networks described in §6.1.1, which rely on mobile devices, and both the individual-oriented sites such as Pinterest and newer networking sites like Google+ and Sgrup, with their specialized information sharing features. Two activities that point toward the realization of Web 3.0 are vlogging, discussed in §6.2.2, and lifelogging and lifecasting, which Aghaei et al. (2012) propose as a replacement for blogging, discussed in §6.2.3.

6.2.2 Vlogging

As the name implies, vlogging is like blogging, but in video form. Just like bloggers, vloggers post regular entries and use these entries to explore a wide range of topics. The only tools needed are Internet access and items such as a webcam, digital camera, or a cell phone with video capabilities (Molyneaux, O’Donnell, Gibson, & Singer 2008). While many sites exist that allow users to upload and watch videos, YouTube is one of the most widely used (Trier 2007: 408). As with blogs, vlogs generally fit into one of several categories; Molyneaux et al. (2008) group the vlogs in their study into five categories: personal, public, entertainment, YouTube, and technology. Studying vlogs could provide information about an additional Discourse feature not available in blogs or SNS: that of gestures. Some researchers, such as Seyfedinipur & Kita (2001) propose that gestures can provide information about speech monitoring and provide a fuller analysis of discourse. It would also be interesting to see if certain gestures were restricted to one Discourse, and if so, which one.

In addition, vlogs provide Internet users with another way of communicating, especially for those for whom video might be more meaningful or accessible. In speaking of storytelling, Lindgren writes that, “in recent years, there has been a proliferation of Deaf storytelling and life narratives in the form of sign language
vlogs...The future of Deaf life ‘writing’ may well lie in vlogs, documentaries, and other forms of visual and digital media” (Lindgren 2012: 355). As of July 4, 2013, the site ASL Vlogs hosts 7,019 videos produced in ASL (ASL Vlogs 2013), and the site DeafVIDEO.tv lists 3,615 vloggers (DeafVIDEO.TV 2013). In a study conducted by Hibbard & Fels (2011) of the use of vlogging among Deaf individuals, a search on YouTube for “ASL vlogs” returned 5,020 results (Hibbard & Fels 2011, 61). This seems like a relatively small number of vlogs, considering that the World Federation of the Deaf estimates that the world population of deaf people is close to 72 million (Visualife n.d.). However, the total number of vlogs compared to the total number of blogs is also small; the organization MeFeedia reports tracking approximately 110,000 vlogs in 2010 (Sinton 2010), compared to the 148,452,047 blogs tracked by NMIncite in October of the same year (Nielsen 2012).

6.2.3 Lifelogging and lifecasting

One of the manifestations of the move from the community-oriented Web 2.0 to the individual-oriented Web 3.0 is lifelogging. In lifelogging, as the name suggests, individuals use technology to create a record or “log” of their lives in order to preserve memories for both themselves and future generations. Sometimes referred to as lifelong capture (Nack 2005: 4), this involves people “digitally logging every moment and element of their lives, [it is] a usually permanent recording of an activity by a participant in the activity” (Nack 2005: 4). While SNS and blogs have, in many cases, created an unintentional lifelog of sorts, this new form of lifelogging creates an intentional record of life.

While it is only in the past decade that a project like this would be realistic, due to the cost, availability, and size of the elements needed, the idea was proposed long before. In 1945, scientist Vannevar Bush describes what he terms the “Memex”, “…a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and
which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory” (Bush 1945: Section 6). He goes on to describe how the user of the Memex would build “trails” of information, thereby creating an “associative index” of information. These trails of information could then be easily accessed: “a touch brings up the code book. Tapping a few keys projects the head of the trail. A lever runs through it at will, stopping at interesting items, going off on side excursions...” (Bush 1945: Section 7).

In 2005, two projects, MyLifeBits, created by researchers at Microsoft, and EyeTap, created by Steve Mann at the University of Toronto, sought to make Bush’s Memex a reality. The EyeTap, which the user wears over one eye or as glasses, modifies light that passes through the device, thereby presenting a computer-mediated image of the physical world to the device-wearer (Nack 2005: 5). These devices act as video recorders, which, combined with a wearable computer and the necessary software to access images, create “an on-demand photographic memory that takes over the task of memorizing ordinary details that might only later become important” (Nack 2005: 5). The data provided by an EyeTap or similar device would be a rich source of data for analyzing Discourse features. The data would likely be very natural, especially if the individual was familiar with wearing the device to the point where he or she forgot that data recording was occurring.

MyLifeBits is closely based on Bush’s idea of the Memex, and incorporates both software design and lifetime storage. One member of the research team, Gordon Bell, sought to create a completely digital version of his life, what he terms an “e-memory”, and to make his life completely paperless. The construction of a “story”, defined as a

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38 See the University of Toronto’s EyeTap Personal Imaging Lab’s website, eyetap.org, for more information
“layout in time and space” to anchor media is key for the MyLifeBits project. This story functions much as Bush’s “trails” did in his vision of the Memex (Gemmel, Bell, Lueder, Drucker, & Wong 2002: Section 2).

The latest attempt to aid those wishing to digitally record their lives is a wearable camera created by Memoto, due to launch during the summer of 2013. The camera was funded by the crowdfunding company Kickstarter (kickstarter.com). The camera, which Memoto sells on its website, is not as all-encompassing as Mann’s EyeTap. However, it does come equipped with GPS and automatically takes a picture every 30 seconds (memoto.com). In addition, those who purchase the camera receive a free year of storage in a cloud that the company has created solely for the use of Memoto camera users.

While MyLifeBits researcher Gordon Bell makes the distinction that he is a “lifelogger, not a lifeblogger” (Bell and Gemmell 2009), reflecting his belief that a lifelog should be a private and secure digital record of a person’s life, other individuals have not made such a distinction. These individuals, known as lifecasters, record personal data just as lifeloggers do, but rather than keeping the data for private use, they “open up the feeds of their experience for others on the Web to follow” (Rosenberg 2009: 347). Some live streaming video channels exist on the Web, such as Justin.tv (justin.tv) and Ustream (ustream.tv), which allow users to broadcast their lives.

### 6.3 Reading and Writing Online Revisited

Internet users are becoming more involved in creating content, whether glogs, vlogs, Pinterest pinboards, or Flickr albums. With all of this activity occurring, many

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39 At a retail price of just under $300 (US), this device is also more accessible than such devices as the EyeTap.
wonder what effect the Internet is having on literacy practices such as reading and writing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, some individuals are quite positive about the nature of reading and writing online, while others are very negative about the state of online literacy practices.

6.3.1 Readers and writers online: Laissez-faire and undiscerning?

Some feel that the Internet, with its hyperlinks, sidebars, advertisements, and popups, not to mention pages and pages of text, has changed the way people view the printed word. For example, Baron (2010) writes that “given the explosion of printed material…the tangible written word is something over which we, paradoxically, seldom linger. As a result, our standards as readers, writers, and even publishers are becoming less discerning” (2010: 166). She refers to the phenomenon of having access to so much written material as “flooding the scriptorium” (2010: 198).

Others fear that reading on the Internet will turn people into “short-form thinkers” due to the prevalence of “short-form mediums” like blogs (Rosenberg 2009: 317). Author Nicholas Carr writes that, “Contemplative Man, the fellow who came to understand the world sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, is a goner. He’s being succeeded by Flickering Man, the fellow who darts from link to link, conjuring the world out of continually refreshed arrays of isolate pixels…The linearity of reason is blurring into the nonlinearity of impression…” (Carr 2007: para. 2). However, in thinking about blogs especially, which still consist mainly of text, despite the many Web 2.0 affordances available, it seems unlikely that this is the case. In fact, Rosenberg writes that, “…next to the crowd-driven networking on Facebook and the stream of Twitter snippets, blogs appear far more substantial and free-standing and powerful” (2009: 335). While blogs may not appeal to all Internet users, such as science fiction author Bruce Sterling, who compared reading blogs to “being beaten to death with croutons” (in Rosenberg 2009: 350), they undeniably evidence literacy practices.
6.3.2 Readers and writers online: A different communicational landscape

Rather than comparing reading and writing offline to reading and writing online, it is perhaps more helpful to view these online literacy practices as occupying a different “communicational landscape” as Kress (2003a: 11) puts it. Thus, the layout of written materials has changed, evidenced online in blog posts, Twitter tweets, or YouTube comments. The logic and layout of the screen, rather than the logic and layout of the page, is now a driving force behind the type of content that is created on the Internet, focusing on the image instead of the written word (Kress 2003a: 19).

However, rather than pointing toward a downfall of writing and reading, some think that these changes, along with the proliferation of social networks and the snippets of text that some believe are making people less thoughtful, are actually prompting people to be more deliberate when they do choose to write. For example, Rosenberg (2009) writes that as a result of the casual messages that can be efficiently communicated to friends on SNS, “…some unquantifiable portion of the world’s blogging has already started to change, to become a little more deliberate…a little less telephonic in nature” (2009: 335). Similarly, some, like Blogger (and Twitter) founder Evan Williams, are seeking to prompt this type of thoughtful attitude in online interactions. As discussed in §6.1.2, Williams’ site Medium seeks to be “a better place to read and write things that matter” (Williams n.d.). Thus, as the hype and novelty of Internet tools wear off, people are trying to find deeper and more meaningful ways to interact with content online. With this in mind, it would be interesting, although very ambitious, to undertake a comparative Discourse analysis study like the one presented in this discussion. However, rather than examining only one type of CMC, the comparison would take place across CMC platforms as a way to test claims such as Carr’s (2007) that people are becoming short-form thinkers. Would sites like Medium prompt more expanded Discourses as compared to, for example, Twitter?
6.4 Concluding Thoughts

6.4.1 Review of study goals and results

This study attempted to examine the three research questions that are reviewed below:

1. For what purposes were Discourses used in blogs?
2. How did change in Discourse choice and use over a year’s worth of blog posts reflect changes in social media and social media practices?
3. How did change in Discourse use reflect social changes, especially those related to literacy?

The analysis of the selected blogs evidenced numerous examples of Gee’s (2011) features of discourse. Each of the bloggers regularly used the tools of situated meaning, intertextuality, social languages, and multiple Discourses for a variety of reasons. For example, bloggers used the tools to convey a variety of identities, establish themselves as authorities on a topic, or to relate discussion topics to background knowledge shared with readers. While each of the bloggers used all four of Gee’s (2011) theoretical tools, they each used these in different ways. This added to the unique style of each of the blogs.

6.4.2 Study Evaluation

While looking at general Discourse use was the initial goal, as analysis continued it was found that examining other aspects of socially-situated discourse was also helpful. Looking at discourse features such as situated meanings, social languages, and intertextuality served to clarify the Discourses employed by each of the bloggers. It was found that not only were the Discourses themselves socially situated, but each of the other tools contributed to the Discourse as a whole.
The study evidences several areas that could be strengthened to provide more reliable and valid results. The most obvious would be to expand the analysis to use all of Gee’s (2011) building tools and to ask all twenty-six of the accompanying questions (Table D1). In addition, all five blogs in this study came from writers based in the United States, which limits the generalizations that can be made. This was unintentional; however, the original sample included a disproportionate number of U.S. blogs. Excluding blogs that were class websites, class blogs, or infrequently updated served to inadvertently eliminate all those blogs that were not written by authors in the U.S. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study that used a different means of selection in order to obtain a more representative sample of the worldwide education blogosphere.

6.4.3 For Further Research

The limited scope of this study necessarily left many avenues partially explored and many more unexplored. It is hoped that this study will prompt more sociolinguistic studies of language and communication online, both using Gee’s (2005, 2011) model and other models that can provide a fuller description of CMCMC. In addition, similar studies should be done of non-English blogs; this study was severely limited by the researcher’s lack of ability to conduct a similar study in a language other than English. Conducting a similar study of signed languages would also be beneficial, perhaps studying vlogs like those discussed in §6.2, or conducting a comparative study between an ASL vlog and a written blog published by the same individual.

Extending the study by including interviews with bloggers would also help to give a more accurate representation of how Discourses are used in blogs, and would increase the validity of the study. Conducting an anonymous survey of a large number of bloggers would also aid in compiling data about such sociolinguistic factors as language attitudes and language use. Adding these two elements in addition to an extended
version of the current study would further increase the validity of the study by
triangulating the data.

Despite the shortcomings of the study, it has helped to advance the field of
discourse analysis, specifically Big ‘D’ Discourse analysis and the accompanying features
of situated meaning, intertextuality, and social languages. The study illustrated a
systematic way to analyze topics that can be somewhat nebulous and validated the
merit of interdisciplinary work, drawing as it did from the fields of communication,
discourse analysis, literacy, literary analysis, sociolinguistics, and sociology. Perhaps
most significantly, the disciplined methodology that was used reaffirmed the value of
qualitative analysis, demonstrating that “qualitative” is not synonymous with
“unscientific” and that any study, be it qualitative or quantitative, needs to be
appropriately rigorous in order to maximize the validity and relevance of the results.
## APPENDIX A

### INITIAL BLOG LIST AND ACCESS INFORMATION

Table A1. All Initially Consulted Blogs and Web Addresses

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<td>The Adventures of Library Girl</td>
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Box of Chocolates http://cecilialemos.com/
Bud The Teacher http://budtheteacher.com/blog/
Burcu Akyol’s Blog http://burcuakyol.com/
Busem Doğan’s Blog http://busemd.edublogs.org/
Busy Teacher http://busyteacher.org
Caitlin Tucker, Blended Learning & Technology in the Classroom http://caitlintucker.com/
Cathy Nelson’s Professional Thoughts http://blog.cathyjonelson.com/
Chia Suan Chong http://chiasuanchong.com/
Classroom Chronicles http://www.classroomchronicles.net/
Class Struggle http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/class-struggle/
Cloaking Inequity http://cloakinginequity.com/
C-o Connections http://coconnections.wonecks.net/
Cogdogblog http://cogdogblog.com/
Confessions of an aca-fan http://henryjenkins.org/
Connectivism http://www.connectivism.ca/
Continuous Everywhere But Differentiable Nowhere http://samjshah.com/
Cool Cat Teacher Blog http://coolcatteacher.blogspot.com
Copy/Paste http://www.peterpappas.com/
Creating Lifelong Learners http://creatinglllearners.blogspot.com/
Creative Star Blog http://creativestarlearning.blogspot.com/
Ctrl Alt Teach http://www.ctrlaltteach.com/
Dan Meyer's Blog http://blog.mrmeyer.com/
Danah Boyd http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/
Dangerously Irrelevant http://dangerouslyirrelevant.org/
The Daring Librarian http://www.thedaringlibrarian.com/
David Truss::Pair-A-Dimes… http://pairadimes.davidtruss.com/
David Wees http://davidwees.com/
Diane Ravitch’s Blog http://dianeravitch.net/
Digital Writing, Digital Teaching http://hickstro.org/
A Difference http://adifference.blogspot.com/
Discovery Educator Network (DEN Blogs) http://community.discoveryeducation.com/blogs.cfm
Doing Mathematics http://www.doingmathematics.com/
Doug Belshaw http://dougbelshaw.com/blog/
Dougg-Off the Record http://dougpete.wordpress.com/
Dr. Doug Green  http://www.drdouggreen.com/who-is-dr-doug-green/
Dropout Nation  http://dropoutnation.net/
Earth Science with Mrs. Wilson  http://mrswilsonscience.com/
Edgalaxy.com: Cool Stuff for Nerdy Teachers  http://edgalaxy.com/
Ed Notes Online  http://ednotesonline.blogspot.com/
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EdSurge  https://www.edsurge.com/
The Edublogger  http://theedublogger.com/
The Educated Kiwi  http://tek.net.nz/
Educating for Democracy  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joel-shatzky/
Education News  http://www.educationnews.org/
Education Next  http://educationnext.org/edblog/
Educational Technology Guy  http://educationaltechnologyguy.blogspot.com/
Educollab  http://educollab.blogspot.com/
Edudemic  http://edudemic.com/2013/03/
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Edutopia  http://www.edutopia.org/blogs
Eduwonk  http://www.eduwonk.com/
E-Learning 24/7  http://elearninfo247.com/
e-learning for life  http://elearningr14.blogspot.com/
E-Learning Provocateur  http://ryan2point0.wordpress.com/
The Electronic Pencil  http://epencil.edublogs.org/
Elementary, My Dear, or Far From It  http://emdfii.blogspot.com/
Emerging EdTech  http://www.emergingedtech.com/
Ewan McIntosh’s edu.blogs.com  http://edu.blogs.com/edublogs/ewanmcintosh.html
Faculty Focus  http://www.facultyfocus.com/topic/articles/
Film English  http://film-english.com/
Flipped Learning  http://flipped-learning.com/?page_id=413
Fractus Learning  http://www.fractuslearning.com
Fred Klonsky  http://preaprez.wordpress.com/
Free Tech for Teachers  http://www.freetech4teachers.com/
A GeekyMomma’s Blog  http://www.leekolbert.com/
Getting Smart  http://gettingsmart.com/cms/
GOOD Education  http://www.good.is/education
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Pepleogy http://pepleogy.blogspot.com/
The PLN Staff Lounge http://www.suelyonjones.com/
The Potato Diaries http://potatopals.blogspot.com/
Practical Theory http://practicaltheory.org/blog/
Preschool Matters http://preschoolmatters.org/
Primary Tech http://primarytech.global2.vic.edu.au/
The Principal of Change http://georgecouros.ca/blog/
A Principal’s Reflections http://esheninger.blogspot.com/
The Quick and the Ed http://www.quickanded.com/
Reading by Example http://readingbyexample.com/
The Reading Zone http://thereadingzone.wordpress.com/
A Recursive Process http://blog.recursiveprocess.com/
Reflections of a Techie http://www.teachingtechie.typepad.com/
Reflections on Teaching http://mizmicer.edublogs.org/
Research in Practice http://researchinpractice.wordpress.com/
School Finance 101 http://schoolfinance101.wordpress.com/
Science Cheerleader http://www.sciencecheerleader.com/
SciStarter Blog http://scistarter.com/blog/
Sean Banville’s Blog http://seanbanville.com/
Shanker Blog http://shankerblog.org/
Sharing Pedagogical Purposes http://pedagogicalpurposes.blogspot.com/
Sherman Dorn http://shermandorn.com/wordpress/
SmartBlog on Education http://smartblogs.com/education/
Social Tech http://fraser.typepad.com/
So You Want To Teach http://www.soyouwanttoteach.com/
South Dublin Libraries http://www.southdublinlibraries.ie/
speech-language therapy.com http://speech-language-therapy.com/
SpeEdChange http://speedchange.blogspot.com/
Stager-to-Go http://stager.tv/blog/
Stephen Downes http://www.downes.ca/
The Strength of Weak Ties http://jakespeak.blogspot.com/
Students First http://www.studentsfirst.org/blog
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<td><a href="http://anmnic.wordpress.com/">http://anmnic.wordpress.com/</a></td>
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<td>Teaching with Soul</td>
<td><a href="http://www.teachingwithsoul.com/">http://www.teachingwithsoul.com/</a></td>
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<td>Tech &amp; Learning</td>
<td><a href="http://www.techlearning.com/index">http://www.techlearning.com/index</a></td>
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<td>A techie’s view</td>
<td><a href="http://philhart.edublogs.org/">http://philhart.edublogs.org/</a></td>
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<td>A Techno Teacher’s Second Life</td>
<td><a href="http://tynacatteneo.edublogs.org/">http://tynacatteneo.edublogs.org/</a></td>
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<td>TEFL Matters</td>
<td><a href="http://marisacostantinides.edublogs.org/">http://marisacostantinides.edublogs.org/</a></td>
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<td>The Tempered Radical</td>
<td><a href="http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/the_tempered_radical/">http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/the_tempered_radical/</a></td>
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<td>The Thinking Stick</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thethinkingstick.com/">http://www.thethinkingstick.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>This Week in Education</td>
<td><a href="http://www.scholasticadministrator.typepad.com/thisweekineducation/">http://www.scholasticadministrator.typepad.com/thisweekineducation/</a></td>
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<td>timlauer.org</td>
<td><a href="http://timlauer.org/">http://timlauer.org/</a></td>
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<td>Transformed</td>
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<td>Tuttle SVC</td>
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<td>Two Writing Teachers</td>
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<td>The Unquiet Librarian</td>
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<td>Upside Down Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>User Generated Education</td>
<td><a href="http://usergeneratededucation.wordpress.com/">http://usergeneratededucation.wordpress.com/</a></td>
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<td>Van Meter Library Voice</td>
<td><a href="http://vanmeterlibraryvoice.blogspot.com/">http://vanmeterlibraryvoice.blogspot.com/</a></td>
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<td>Vicky Lora’s blog</td>
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<td>Vladimir’s Blog</td>
<td><a href="http://vladimiramicakova.edublogs.org/">http://vladimiramicakova.edublogs.org/</a></td>
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<td>Voices from the Learning Revolution</td>
<td><a href="http://plpnetwork.com/voices/">http://plpnetwork.com/voices/</a></td>
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<td>The Washington Teacher</td>
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<td>The Wejr Board</td>
<td><a href="http://chriswejr.com/">http://chriswejr.com/</a></td>
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<td>Blog Title</td>
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<td>What’s Language Doing Here?</td>
<td><a href="http://whatslanguagedoinghere.wordpress.com/">http://whatslanguagedoinghere.wordpress.com/</a></td>
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<td>What We Done at School Today</td>
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<td>Work in Progress</td>
<td><a href="http://social.dol.gov/blog/">http://social.dol.gov/blog/</a></td>
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<td>Wright’s Room</td>
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<td>Writing Frameworks</td>
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<td>wwwatanabe</td>
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<td>You blog</td>
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<td>Young Zhao</td>
<td><a href="http://zhaolearning.com/">http://zhaolearning.com/</a></td>
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<td>ZarcoEnglish</td>
<td><a href="http://zarcoenglish.blogspot.com/">http://zarcoenglish.blogspot.com/</a></td>
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<td>Zero-Knowledge Proofs</td>
<td><a href="http://thescamdog.wordpress.com/">http://thescamdog.wordpress.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoltán Dörnyei’s Personal Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.zoltandornyei.co.uk/">http://www.zoltandornyei.co.uk/</a></td>
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</table>
# APPENDIX B

## BREAKDOWN OF EXCLUDED BLOGS AND RESULTING TOTALS

Table B1. Number of Blogs Excluded and Resulting Number of Included Blogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogs excluded: Written for an organization</th>
<th>Blogs excluded: Multiple authors</th>
<th>Blogs Excluded: Specialized focus</th>
<th>Blogs excluded: Personal website</th>
<th>Blogs excluded: Link list</th>
<th>Blogs excluded: Inaccessible</th>
<th>Blogs excluded: Duplicates</th>
<th>Blogs excluded: Multiple reasons</th>
<th>Included blogs: Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach 100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Edublogs</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Onalytica</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Snowball 10</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Snowball 11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Snowball 12</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>34</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX C

BLOG POSTS SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS

Table C1. List of Posts Analyzed in the Study

a. CogDogBlog

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Permalink</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skamper Gone a Decade</td>
<td>March 26, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/8702">http://cogdogblog.com/8702</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The S Word</td>
<td>April 22, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/8807">http://cogdogblog.com/8807</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Early on the X</td>
<td>May 3, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/8855">http://cogdogblog.com/8855</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 Letter Home from Camp</td>
<td>June 12, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/9016">http://cogdogblog.com/9016</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The 60,000 Times Question Remains Unanswered</td>
<td>July 6, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/9103">http://cogdogblog.com/9103</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Flickr</td>
<td>August 29, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/9446">http://cogdogblog.com/9446</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEESE is not a Thing: Emergence, Disruption, and Dairy Products</td>
<td>November 21, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/16637">http://cogdogblog.com/16637</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuzzy Memory of Aunt Bebe</td>
<td>December 12, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/17411">http://cogdogblog.com/17411</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Howdy, #ETMOOC (Video)</td>
<td>January 15, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/18967">http://cogdogblog.com/18967</a></td>
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<td>Dog 1: Copyright 0</td>
<td>January 25, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/19068">http://cogdogblog.com/19068</a></td>
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<td>What is Storytelling? For #ETMOOC</td>
<td>February 12, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://cogdogblog.com/19230">http://cogdogblog.com/19230</a></td>
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### b. Hack Education

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<tr>
<td>Why is Mathalicious Raising Money on Kickstarter?</td>
<td>May 10, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://hackeducation.com/2012/05/10/mathalicious-kickstarter/">http://hackeducation.com/2012/05/10/mathalicious-kickstarter/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlisted</td>
<td>October 10, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://hackeducation.com/2012/10/02/enlisted/">http://hackeducation.com/2012/10/02/enlisted/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Permalink</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Reminder to myself: Homework is useless</td>
<td>March 29, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/03/29/reminder-to-myself-homework-is-useless/">http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/03/29/reminder-to-myself-homework-is-useless/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The art of teaching perseverance</td>
<td>April 10, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/04/10/the-art-of-teaching-perseverance/">http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/04/10/the-art-of-teaching-perseverance/</a></td>
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<td>How to teach kids to buy happiness</td>
<td>May 29, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/05/29/how-to-teach-kids-to-buy-happiness/">http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/05/29/how-to-teach-kids-to-buy-happiness/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dispatch from the Wisconsin election: True school activists vote for Walker</td>
<td>June 5, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/06/05/dispatch-from-the-wisconsin-election-true-school-activists-vote-for-walker/">http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/06/05/dispatch-from-the-wisconsin-election-true-school-activists-vote-for-walker/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Here’s the career math to know if you should homeschool</td>
<td>July 13, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/07/13/homeschooling-is-a-good-career-decision-for-many/">http://homeschooling.penelopetrunk.com/2012/07/13/homeschooling-is-a-good-career-decision-for-many/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>URL</td>
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<tr>
<td>The only time I’ve ever felt shunned as a Jew was in my local homeschool group</td>
<td>October 10, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2012/10/08/the-only-time-ive-ever-felt-shunned-as-a-jew-was-in-my-homeschooling-group/">http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2012/10/08/the-only-time-ive-ever-felt-shunned-as-a-jew-was-in-my-homeschooling-group/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>How to homeschool if you love going to work</td>
<td>November 19, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2012/11/19/how-to-homeschool-if-you-love-going-to-work/">http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2012/11/19/how-to-homeschool-if-you-love-going-to-work/</a></td>
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<td>Traditional school heavily favors the introvert</td>
<td>December 30, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2012/12/30/traditional-school-heavily-favors-the-introvert/">http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2012/12/30/traditional-school-heavily-favors-the-introvert/</a></td>
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<td>Bullying is intrinsic to the school setting</td>
<td>January 15, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2013/01/15/bullying-is-intrinsic-to-the-school-setting/">http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2013/01/15/bullying-is-intrinsic-to-the-school-setting/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Five ways to tell if your kids should go to college</td>
<td>February 26, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2013/02/26/five-ways-to-tell-if-your-kids-should-go-to-college/">http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2013/02/26/five-ways-to-tell-if-your-kids-should-go-to-college/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>School undermines our natural ability to learn</td>
<td>March 14, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2013/03/14/school-undermines-a-kids-natural-learning-ability/">http://homeschooling.penetrunk.com/2013/03/14/school-undermines-a-kids-natural-learning-ability/</a></td>
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### d. The JLV

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<tr>
<td>For The Person That I Do Have</td>
<td>June 17, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://thejosevilson.com/for-the-person-that-i-do-have/">http://thejosevilson.com/for-the-person-that-i-do-have/</a></td>
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<td>On Setting Expectations In Your Classroom [For The Student You Once Were]</td>
<td>September 13, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://thejosevilson.com/on-setting-expectations-in-your-classroom-for-the-student-you-once-were/">http://thejosevilson.com/on-setting-expectations-in-your-classroom-for-the-student-you-once-were/</a></td>
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<td>Some Nights (What We Stand For)</td>
<td>November 29, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://thejosevilson.com/some-nights-what-we-stand-for/">http://thejosevilson.com/some-nights-what-we-stand-for/</a></td>
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<td>A Quick Note on Student Voice [Because You Need To Hear It...Again]</td>
<td>February 7, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://thejosevilson.com/a-quick-note-on-student-voice-because-you-need-to-hear-it-again/">http://thejosevilson.com/a-quick-note-on-student-voice-because-you-need-to-hear-it-again/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Suspension of Time and School</td>
<td>March 5, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://thejosevilson.com/a-suspension-of-time-and-school/">http://thejosevilson.com/a-suspension-of-time-and-school/</a></td>
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e. PREAPrez

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<td>Interview with myself about the NEA RA now that I am home</td>
<td>July 5, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/07/05/interview-with-myself-about-the-nea-ra-now-that-i-am-home/">http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/07/05/interview-with-myself-about-the-nea-ra-now-that-i-am-home/</a></td>
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<td>Saturday coffee</td>
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<td>My letter to Obama</td>
<td>October 19, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/10/19/my-letter-to-obama/">http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/10/19/my-letter-to-obama/</a></td>
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<td>The Sunday Mail</td>
<td>November 11, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/11/11/the-sunday-mail-13/">http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/11/11/the-sunday-mail-13/</a></td>
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<td>Saturday Coffee</td>
<td>December 29, 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/12/29/saturday-coffee-143/">http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2012/12/29/saturday-coffee-143/</a></td>
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<td>Remembering Dr. King on his birthday</td>
<td>January 15, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2013/01/15/remembering-dr-king-on-his-birthday/">http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2013/01/15/remembering-dr-king-on-his-birthday/</a></td>
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<td>Obama's education vision</td>
<td>February 14, 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2013/02/14/obamas-education-vision/">http://preaprez.wordpress.com/2013/02/14/obamas-education-vision/</a></td>
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APPENDIX D

GEE’S QUESTIONS FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Table D1. Complete List of Gee’s Building Tasks and Accompanying Analysis Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Task</th>
<th>Analysis Questions</th>
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</table>
| Building significance | 1. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?  
2. What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, people, objects, artifacts, and institutions relevant in this situation?  
3. What situated meanings and values are attached to other oral and written texts quoted or alluded to in the situation (intertextuality)?  
4. What Discourse models seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?  
5. What institutions and/or Discourses are being (re-)produced in this situation and how are they being stabilized or transformed in the act? |
| Building activities  | 6. What is the larger or main activity (or set of activities) going on in the situation?  
7. What sub-activities compose this activity (or those activities)?  
8. What actions compose these sub-activities and activities? |
| Building identities  | 9. What identities (Roles, positions), with their concomitant personal, social, and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values, seem to be relevant to, taken for granted in, or under construction in the situation?  
10. How are these identities stabilized or transformed in the situation?  
11. In terms of identities, activities, and relationships, what Discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways? |
| Building relationships| 12. What sorts of social relationships seem to be relevant to, taken for granted in, or under construction in the situation?  
13. How are these social relationships stabilized or transformed in the situation?  
14. How are other oral or written texts quoted or alluded to so as to set up certain relationships to |
| Building politics (the distribution of social goods) | 15. In terms of identities, activities, and relationships, what Discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  
16. What social goods (e.g., status, power, aspects of gender, race, and class, or more narrowly defined social networks and identities) are relevant (and irrelevant) in this situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  
17. How are these social goods connected to the Discourse models and Discourses operative in the situation? |
| Building connections | 18. What sorts of connections—looking backward and/or forward—are made within and across utterances and large stretches of the interaction?  
19. What sorts of connections are made to previous or future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions, and Discourses outside the current situation?  
20. How is intertextuality (quoting or alluding to other texts) used to create connections among the current situation and other ones or among different Discourses?  
21. How do connections of the sort in 18, 19, and 20 help (together with situated meanings and Discourse models) to constitute “coherence”—and what sort of “coherence”—in the situation? |
| Building significance for sign systems and knowledge | 22. What sign systems are relevant (or irrelevant) in the situation (e.g., speech, writing, images, and gestures)? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  
23. What systems of knowledge and ways of knowing are relevant (or irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  
24. What languages in the sense of “national” languages like English, Russian, or Hausa, are relevant (or irrelevant) in the situation?  
25. What social languages are relevant (or irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?  
26. How is quoting and alluding to other oral or written texts (intertextuality) used to engage with the issues covered in questions 22-25? |
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