

Developing Productive Discourse through Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning

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Abstract

Changing global contexts and new educational goals have created the needs for developing students' capacity for 21st century education skills; collaboration is pivotal in learning, innovation and knowledge creation. Central to contemporary theories is the idea that learning is social, situated and distributed; knowledge is socially constructed in groups and communities; innovation is a collective rather than an individual endeavor. Collaboration is an essential part of how we think and learn and how we create for knowledge advancement.

While it is now commonplace for students to work together using computers, putting students together does not mean they would learn or engage themselves productively; online discussion is easily superficial or fragmented. Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) is an inter-disciplinary research field that examines how new learning emerges in collaboration; how technology and tools support collaborative discourse; and how to design computer-supported learning environments to facilitate productive collaboration and knowledge building. In this talk, I will introduce theories of learning and collaboration and affordance of CSCL and examine how productive collaboration and discourse can be developed using principles, strategies and analysis of CSCL. Research examples of CSCL and knowledge-building and contribution and issues of CSCL for future-oriented education will be discussed.

Carol Chan is a Professor at The Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong with rich experience in research and teaching. Her research area is Learning Sciences and she specializes in computer-supported collaborative learning, knowledge building, teacher professional development and Chinese learners. Her research is internationally recognized: She is Associate Editor of International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, a flagship journal in the field of Learning Sciences, and she co-edits The International Handbook of Collaborative Learning. She serves on the Editorial Board of all top-ranking SSCI journals in Education and Educational Research including Educational Psychologist, Learning and Instruction, and Journal of the Learning Sciences. She has won international research awards including best conference papers from International Society of Learning Sciences and American Educational Research Association. She is a Co-Convenor of the Strategic Research Theme on Science of Learning at University of Hong Kong and has conducted large-scale Ministry-funded university-school partnership projects on knowledge building and teacher communities. She is also a recipient of University Teaching Award and Faculty Outstanding Research Supervisor Award.