Social, Motivational and Affective Dimensions of Learning through Social Interaction

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Abstract: There is strong evidence of the cognitive benefits of collaborative-sense-making through talk and dialogue. However, it is often challenging to *elicit* and *sustain* student participation in such practices. This workshop emerges from growing enquiry across the learning sciences on the social, motivational and affective dimensions of learning through social interaction. Examining and integrating such dimensions in empirical research on learning through social interaction raises fundamental methodological, conceptual and theoretical issues for the field. This workshop aims to bring together scholars from different disciplines to critically examine these issues and to map the terrain for future research.

Theoretical Background

This workshop emerges from growing enquiry in the learning sciences on social, motivational and affective dimensions of learning through social interaction. Research on talk and dialogue has produced strong evidence that certain forms of collaborative sense-making that involves explanation and argumentation, can produce robust learning outcomes (a/o, Resnick, Asterhan & Clarke, in press).

Until recently, research on dialogue has been limited to examining the cognitive processes and outcomes of dialogue. However, it remains challenging to both *elicit* and *sustain* student participation in dialogue (Clarke, in press). Social processes, (e.g. positioning, motivation, affect, and identity), engaged through dialogue may serve as critical pathways to engagement in learning, and therefore, critical pathways to robust learning outcomes. Thus, there is a need to understand the social processes and outcomes of dialogue, to better understand how to support all learners so that they might benefit in terms of robust learning outcomes.

Recently, scholars have become more sensitive to and interested in understanding the social, affective and motivational dimensions of collaborative sense-making, both in classroom as well as in computer-mediated settings (e.g., Baker, Andriessen & Jarvena, 2013; Kreijns, Kirschner & Vermeulen, 2013). Issues of identity, beliefs, interest, and authority can affect students' willingness to engage in dialogue, as well as impact the way in which they choose to engage in it. In computer-mediated dialogue, decreased social presence and sociability are believed to impede on the establishment of rapport, a sense of community and strong interpersonal relationships, which may be necessary for productive learning interactions (Kreijns et al., 2013). In other instances, however decreased social presence may also facilitate learning outcomes, such as in the case of learning through critical argumentation with a disagreeing peer (Asterhan & Babichenko, 2013).

These non-cognitive constructs have been extensively researched in adjacent research fields, such as Sociology (e.g., positioning, identity, norms) and Education (academic motivation), Social Psychology (e.g., small group functioning), and Educational Psychology (e.g., identity, affect). The integration of social, affective and motivational constructs from other disciplines into the study of learning through social interaction then requires the development of new methodologies and, often time, revision or adaptation of 'classical concepts'. This raises fundamental methodological, conceptual and evidentiary questions:

- How can social, motivational and affective dimensions of learning be observed in learning interactions and dialogue, and how can they be distinguished from cognitive processes?
- What are the theoretical and methodological challenges of measuring social-affective- motivational dimensions of learning through social interaction? (Particularly in light of new technologies for learning that provide new forms of data on learning processes.)
- How might we leverage these forms of evidence on learning processes to adapt instruction, in order to better support productive learning through dialogue in practice?

Workshop Goals

This workshop brings together scholars that are active in this emergent area of inquiry in the learning sciences. It aims to attract participants from a range of disciplinary and research traditions, both from within the Learning Sciences, as well as from adjacent research traditions (e.g., classroom dialogue research, CSCL, cooperative learning, argumentation, disciplinary teaching practices, HCI, positioning, motivation, and learning analytics), who use a range of methodological tools (experimental, discursive, ethnographic and computational). This workshop builds on the 2011 AERA research conference on learning through dialogue, and a 2013 EARLI symposium on the barriers and enablers of engaging in learning dialogue. It will constitute the first such workshop that brings together an emerging community of scholars from different disciplines to critically

examine the issues and options for examining social, affective and motivational dimensions of learning in social interaction, and map the terrain for future research.

Workshop Agenda

Part I. Short presentations.

The morning session will be dedicated to facilitating detailed knowledge of each other's work, approaches, methodologies and frameworks. All the submitted papers and bios will be available on the workshop website, one week in advance. We will dedicate the morning session to becoming familiar with each other's work through short presentations, Q&A and discussion opportunities. Presenters will be instructed to follow a strict presentation format: 15 minute presentations that that will highlight the theoretical framework, the social-affective-motivational construct investigated, methodology, extensive examples of data analyses and the types of research questions addressed. This unified, focused format is expected to not only enhance understanding but also facilitate comparison and integration for the afternoon activities. The review process will seek to identify provocative position papers to help stimulate the discussion on substantive issues.

Part II. Science Café activities.

The afternoon session will be based on question-oriented organization with lively discussions. 3-4 round tables are organized, each managed by an assigned Moderator. Each Moderator/table will be focused on one substantive area to probe groups on in small group discussion. The 3-4 discussion topics will be decided and formulated in advance by the organizers in consult with the Program Committee and based on the submitted position papers. The groups will go through a round-robin of discussions with each moderator, rotating tables every 20-30 minutes. Therefore, in the 1 ½ round-robin, each group will have spent 20-30 minutes in small group discussions with all of the Moderators.

The groups will be assembled so as to ensure maximum disciplinary heterogeneity, based on the short bios submitted by each workshop participant. Moderators will begin their small group discussions with a brief overview of their topics, and probe groups as they discuss, raising the challenging questions. The Moderator will write the main ideas for each group on a sheet. When groups move through the round-robin, the Moderator will lead subsequent groups in discussions that build on issues raised in previous group discussions. This is expected to push the limits of these issues over the course of round-robin.

The round-robin will be followed by a short coffee break, during which moderators will sort out the main themes from each table. Moderators will present these themes in a plenary session (30 minutes). The final hour will be dedicated to a plenary open discussion with all participants, led by the one of the Committee members. This discussion will focus on four main questions:
- What do we know?
- What are the implications?
- Where should we go next?
- What are productive and fruitful venues for future interdisciplinary collaboration?

References

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