Majok Ring

Vanwagenen

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Discourse communities, groups of communicators with a common goal or interest that adopts certain preferred ways of participating in public discussion, are within every active part of society and contain influence through language, inclusion, relationships, consistency, educational values, and so on. These communities can range from simple pen collectors to aeronautics societies and so on in which a variety of people are engaged with. The community in which I am a part of, skateboarding, has welcomed me with open arms and still continues to extend its membership to anyone who is willing to learn. This populace remains dedicated to being an accepting culture which motivates others to challenge themselves and learn to learn to solve problems from another approach.

Language is always an essential part of any culture and can either form bridges or barriers to other discourse communities. Within skateboarding, this aspect is evident as there is specific trick terminology, combinations, and a variety of other behaviors which can be tracked to its origins of other communities such as surfing and longboarding. This swapping/sharing of language and terminology is a defining part of the connection in which they have between communities. As you borrow and create new words from other cultures, it drives you to learn and study more about those other communities and in doing that, you may find new values and beliefs with them. This specialized vocabulary lies within the onset of trick skateboarding beginning in the 1970s when surfers needed a way to surf when the waves were low and developed skateboarding. With the advent of this new pastime, the surfing community branched off into new sectors as members shared their terminology and language with the newly established skateboarders. This is where the word carve originates from in skateboarding as well as airs, wipeout, tail, primo and much more lingo. As well as the passed down vocabulary, new terminology was established to accommodate the new medium in which skateboarding relies on, concrete. Vocabulary such as Goofyfoot, Mongo, Fakie, Nollie, and Switch, all of which designate your stance on the board. These terms are generally well distributed and can supersede regional differences in language/terminology.

In order to remain defined as a discourse community, the collective must have a way of sharing or documenting their values and provide an atmosphere which promotes the debate of those values. Within Skateboarding, the exchange of ideas is documented through mediums such as photography, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), Magazines (Thrasher), and Youtube, all of which promote the distribution our work with the world to reach greater audiences of likeminded individuals. Since skateboarding is highly subjective, there are a plurality of feelings/perspectives that can be claimed and also challenged by others. This is evident as Adam Creagan argues the “make’s” (landing of a trick) value and its associated intensity. “The make easily ranks among the greatest feelings in the world. It is an utterly sole, individual achievement. And they don’t come easy. Makes are earned with blood and sweat, in as literal a sense as those two words can be used. They are born from bruises, lacerations, aggravation, and a thousand other displeasures—but they’re worth it.” – Adam Creagan, Thrasher Magazine. Although Creagan is able to assert his claim to multitudes of readers, others in opposition are also able to refute his claims by arguing that the make is not about overcoming failure or increased effort, but is instead about reaching a state of perfection in which you are synchronized with the board’s movements and can effortlessly succeed in your trick. With these two contending viewpoints, the skateboarders can analyze each claim and use their own perspective to reach what they deem to be the actual meaning.

Influence remains an integral part of any discourse community as their customs and values can be taken on by its surrounding communities. Skateboarding, as a community, can influence many other parts of our society such as style, music, and can teach individuals to set and reach goals as well as look to themselves for new challenges. Street wear commonly used in skateboarding has branched off to other communities, for example skateboarding shoes are casually worn by many other groups not associated with skateboarding. This style is well documented and its changes over the years reflect the same changes on clothing trends and new styles. This, coupled with the ability to incorporate new styles makes skateboarding much more versatile in commonality as there is a wide variety of form and design. Skateboarding has significance on other similar discourse communities as it is a viable form of transportation in which most people are familiar with. Take for example a college environment, in order to reach from location to location, you see many students riding a variety of boards such as skateboards, longboards, pennyboards, and cruisers. Each recognized within a specific subset of skateboarding, but as a whole can be easily identified with the same people. This influence can be found within myriad genres and can help to shape and develop other discourse communities.

Within any discourse community, we rely on the criticism of others to inspire debate and form new trends and take action. Skateboarders utilize this criticism can help mature their editing, writing, video composition, and trick variety. Since the common intent of skateboarding is to expand your perspective and continue to progress in new skills, honest feedback remains an integral part of this community and is made through specific websites such as Thrasher, The Berrics, or Youtube. The method of feedback is much the same as a writing review. According to Richard Straub, you should leave the writer with their dignity intact and work with them, not against them. “Always be ready to praise. But always look to point to places that are not working well or that are not yet working as well as they might. “Richard Straub, Responding—Really Responding—to other Students’ Writing. This exemplifies the need for truly objective criticisms as the composer of the medium, must know what they are intending to accomplish and present within their work. That being said, it is important to remember to be courteous in your review as this is still work in which someone values and took time to compose. Most skateboarders can adhere to this rule as it is a basic courtesy towards others, but there can be instances in which some individuals can become negative and provide unhelpful criticism. Compare this comment, “I imagine the kid who sent this video won’t read this but to anyone else who needs help: I think what Aaron was trying to say by lean backward is more like jumping backward or kind of shift your weight back in the air. If you learn backward before you do the trick you may land it but you will most likely slip out. This kid’s main problem, other than his scoop, was that he really just wasn’t jumping enough.” to this statement by another Youtube user, “Okay, I am not going to judge how good you are at skating, because no one starts out amazing. What I will judge though, is the terrible video. The intro was stupid and unfunny to say the least, it seems like there is a lot of attempts at humour in this that really bombed. You really ham it up when you fall too... that's a no no. You come across as idiots when you do that. The backpack line… is pretty stupid to say the least. Good song choice though, I'll give you that.” Although both of these comments reflect the need for improvement, the prior provided helpful criticism by stating the issues clearly and providing possible solutions while the latter proved to be an attack which left no specific details for change. With these exchange of criticism and ideas, skateboarders can create an environment in which fosters the initiative for progression in which discourse communities are based upon.

As we understand discourse communities to be parts of society which stress certain objectives and interact with its members to share information towards the achievement of those goals, Skateboarding, by definition, fulfills those requirements through its highly interactive modes of communication and the distribution of new work such as videos and articles. This is evident through online social networking as well as documentation of peer review/commentary in which serve the purpose of advancing its members in both form and function. A unique aspect which drives individuals towards Skateboarding its inclusive nature as it proves to be a vast community with accepted people of all style, personality, race, creed, and religions and focus on the goal of bettering themselves through visualization and self-determination. In this group we accept newcomers openly and look to give advice and watch others progress in their skills and gain new perspectives on life. Within this community, criticism and feedback are essential parts of the learning process as we aim to share our work with others and display our skills and gain ideas from others as well. Discourse communities are generally arguments of definition, in which there are many beliefs of what can be defined as a discourse community, but Skateboarding, has proven its nature as a discourse community with its promotion of discussion and feedback through multiple sources as well as its addition of new members due to its highly inclusive behavior of which other communities lack.