The Materiality of Learning

The field of educational research lacks a methodology for the study of learning that does not begin with humans, their aims, and their interests. *The Materiality of Learning* seeks to overcome this human-centered mentality by developing a novel spatial approach to the materiality of learning. Drawing on science and technology studies (STS), Estrid Sørensen compares an Internet-based 3D virtual environment project in a fourth-grade class with the class’s work with traditional learning materials, including blackboards, textbooks, notebooks, pencils, and rulers. Taking into account pupils’ and teachers’ physical bodies, Professor Sørensen analyzes the multiple forms of technology, knowledge, and presence that are enacted with the materials. Featuring detailed ethnographic descriptions and useful end-of-chapter summaries, this book is an important reference for professionals and graduate or postgraduate students interested in a variety of fields, including educational studies, educational psychology, social anthropology, and STS.

Estrid Sørensen is currently a Research Associate in the Department of European Ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin. She is also Associate Professor in the Department of Learning at the School of Education at Aarhus University, Denmark. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Copenhagen, where she was a research leader in the EU-funded project “5D – Local Learning Communities in a Global World.” Previously, she was a visiting scholar at the Centre for Science Studies at Lancaster University, and she has held various other research and teaching positions at universities in Berlin and Denmark. She also worked on research projects concerning protection of children from harmful media content as well as on computer game health information. Moreover, she has been a member of the Danish film classification board. In 2006 Professor Sørensen was granted the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship. She has contributed to several edited volumes and to many peer-reviewed journals, including *Comparative Sociology, Forum Qualitative Social Research, Nordisk Psykologi, Nordiske Udkast – Tidsskrift for kritisk samfundsforskning, Outlines – Critical Social Studies*, and *Psyke og Logos*. 
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The Materiality of Learning

Technology and Knowledge in Educational Practice

ESTRID SØRENSEN

Humboldt University
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Series Foreword

This series for Cambridge University Press is widely known as an international forum for studies of situated learning and cognition.

Innovative contributions are being made by anthropology; by cognitive, developmental, and cultural psychology; by computer science; by education; and by social theory. These contributions are providing the basis for new ways of understanding the social, historical, and contextual nature of learning, thinking, and practice that emerges from human activity. The empirical settings of these research inquiries range from the classroom to the workplace, to the high-technology office, and to learning in the streets and in other communities of practice. The situated nature of learning and remembering through activity is a central fact. It may appear obvious that human minds develop in social situations and extend their sphere of activity and communicative competencies. But cognitive theories of knowledge representation and learning alone have not provided sufficient insight into these relationships.

This series was born of the conviction that new exciting interdisciplinary syntheses are underway as scholars and practitioners from diverse fields seek to develop theory and empirical investigations adequate for characterizing the complex relations of social and mental life, and for understanding successful learning wherever it occurs. The series invites contributions that advance our understanding of these seminal issues.

Roy Pea
Christian Heath
Lucy Suchman
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¹ As any other names of places, institutions, and persons directly related to the informants of the research presented in this study, this name is a pseudonym.
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