

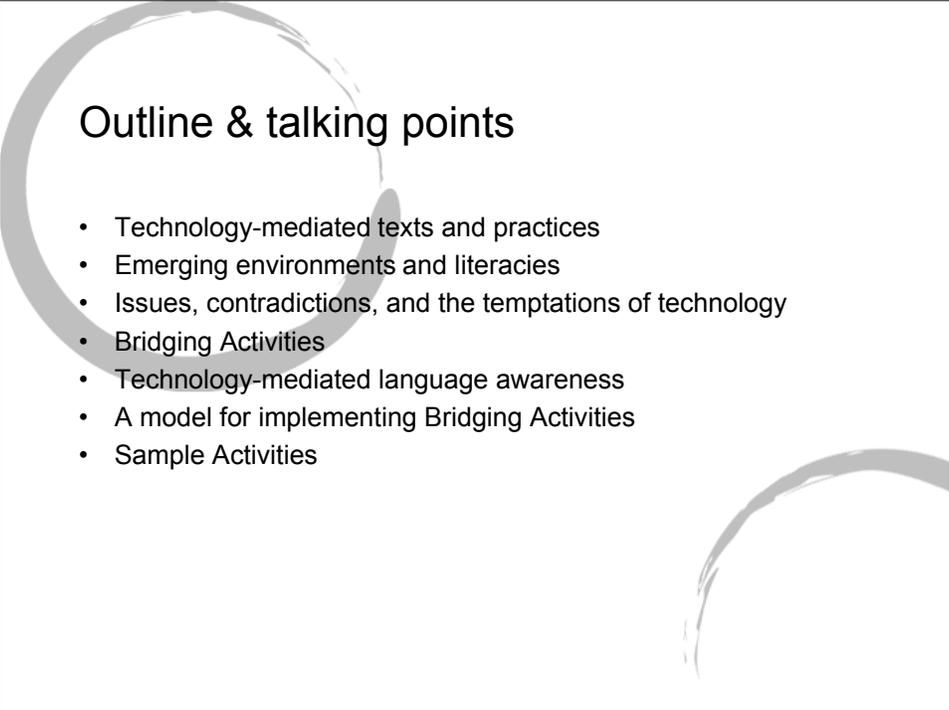
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*Developing technology-
mediated language
awareness through
bridging activities*

CALICO 2009

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Outline & talking points

- Technology-mediated texts and practices
- Emerging environments and literacies
- Issues, contradictions, and the temptations of technology
- Bridging Activities
- Technology-mediated language awareness
- A model for implementing Bridging Activities
- Sample Activities

Tech-mediated texts and practices

- **CMC:** may be synchronous or asynchronous, may be stand alone (IM, chat)
- **Blogs:** may be individual, group, news-oriented, community- or domain-oriented; may emphasize authorship
- **Collaborative Documents:** e.g. wikis or Googledocs; emphasizes collaborative authorship
- **Remixing, mashups & machinima:** involve the appropriation, combination, and re-configuration of various texts and media types (e.g. videos, music, animation)
- **Texting and Twittering:** constrain and afford language use and communication in new ways
- **Social networking & 'utilities'** (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn)
- **Digital gaming** (MMOGs, SIEs, Virtual Worlds, stand-alone games): social interaction, collaboration and identity play
- Tech-mediated texts and practices are **converging** (Jenkins, 2006), as everyday use increasingly combines all of the above

Big context & emerging environments

- 1.6 billion Internet users world wide (est. Jan, 2009)
- 1 in 10 individuals in the U.S. have started a blog
- 14 + million play World of Warcraft
- "In a statistical sense, we may one day communicate with each other far more via computer mediation than in **direct interaction**. The effects on what counts as 'normal' language acquisition could be similarly profound." (Crystal, 2001: 241)

Schooling v. emerging literacies

- Amplification of 'generation gap'
- Internet use slow to inform school epistemologies, content, policy, and long-term planning
- Relevance crisis across K-12 and the university
- Very few course materials that explicitly teach or even acknowledge new media literacies
- Digital vernaculars = stigmatized varieties
 - Labov (1972)
 - Selection bias always operates (e.g., Bourdieu)

Issues and contradictions

- History is productive of naturalized arenas of habituated activity and power relations
 - o Traditional emphases within the academy -- analytic rigor, epistemological and linguistic prescriptivism
 - o Web 2.0 as an "open source epistemology" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007) -- epistemological and linguistic pluralism
- Double bind contradiction
 - o Critical importance of high stakes power genres
 - o Emergent-contingent logics of high frequency digital vernaculars

Allure (and dangers) of digital vernaculars

- Mediated communication is not a proxy or practice environment, it's *the real thing*
- Revisioning L2 education through incorporation of the **digital commons**: blogs, wikis, contact with age peers, fan websites, gaming, virtual environments, social networking, twittering, etc.
- In some cases, how to carry out mediated communication should be the *goal* of educational practice

Bridging Activities

(Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2009)

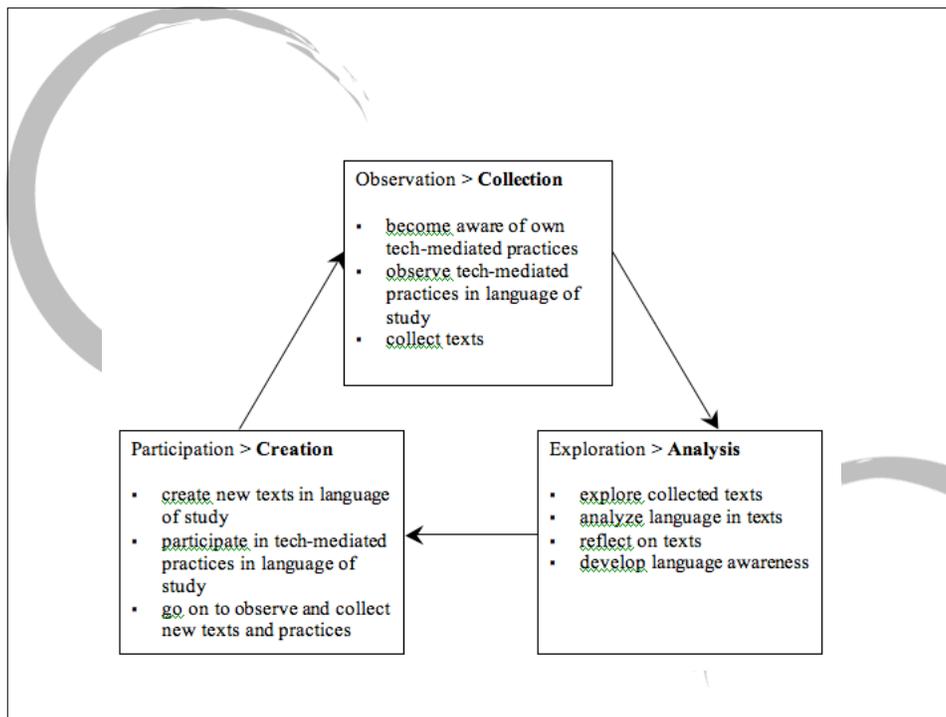
- Acknowledgement that **Internet technologies have transformed** everyday communicative contexts, genres, and practices
- New literacies are highly **relevant** to youth culture, but present curricular integration and implementation challenges (e.g. How do we teach them? Which technologies? Which texts? Which practices?)
- **Bridging Activities**: bridge between in-class activity and everyday, out-of-class tech-mediated language use, by having students collect and analyze tech-mediated texts of their own choosing in the language of study, and ultimately participate in tech-mediated practices in the language of study.

Tech-mediated language awareness

- Goal -- Bridging Activities develop **Language Awareness**: an understanding of the interrelationships between language choice and social function
- Language is understood as an **embodiment of social practice**
- Language use is presented as an object of analysis
- Lexico-grammar is presented as **emergent** from use, contextually **contingent**, and as a **resource** for carrying out social and informational actions
- Technology-mediated language is both the means and the object of **critical language awareness**
 - As the **means**: multimodal quality of technological mediation is authentic/everyday (it's what they do), useful (it's what they may need to do in the language of study), and effective (in a way that affords learning)
 - As the **object**: understanding of the context-, genre-, and practice-specific uses of a particular tech-mediated language type may transfer to understanding of all language uses as contextually contingent

Application

- **Goal**: to create a pedagogical framework to bridge tech-mediated practices and develop critical language awareness
- **ACTFL communication standards** (e.g. Shrum & Glisan, 2005): preparation (interpretive) → comprehension (interpretive) → interpretation (interpretive/interpersonal) → application (presentational)
- **Cultural experience** (e.g. Moran, 2001): participation (know how) → description (know about) → interpretation (know why) → reflection (know oneself)
- **Genre instruction** (e.g. Hyland, 2004): developing context → modeling → joint negotiation → independent construction → comparing texts
- **Language awareness** (McCarthy & Carter, 1994; van Lier 1995): discourse features ↔ social contexts (contrastive, continuum, inferencing)
- **Multiliteracies** (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kern, 2000): situated practice → overt instruction → critical framing → transformed practice
- Common approach: situated to transformed practice through instructor mediation



A model for implementing Bridging Activities

Observation & Collection:

- Purpose: to situate learner-relevant practices for analysis and future creation
- Ss observe Internet practices and collect texts of interest, focusing on identification, description, and reflection

Exploration & Analysis:

- Purpose: to notice, critically examine, and compare the linguistic (i.e. register) and social (i.e. genre) features of the Internet texts and practices under study.
- Ss analyze the linguistic and social features of the observed and collected texts, using genre-, corpus-, and comparative analysis techniques.

Participation & Creation:

- Purpose: to participate in Internet practices and create Internet texts
- Ss participate in Internet practices, e.g. blog and messageboard posts, and create Internet texts, e.g. videos, blogs, webpages, etc.
- Ideally, leads Ss to observe, collect, explore, analyze, create, and participate in new texts and practices in the language of study, either as part of a structured class activity, or on their own as independent learners.

Observation & Collection

Internet Use Survey

- **Objective:** to become aware of one's own Internet use habits, and to compare those to others.
- **Description:** Ss first conduct Web research on Internet and technology use habits in the countries of study and in the US. They then create a survey and administer it to themselves in the language of study, and to other students in English. Back in class they consolidate the results and present them to the class.

Net text Portfolio

- **Objective:** to collect Internet texts for reflection and analysis by creating a portfolio of texts such as chat and IM transcripts, messageboard archives, blog page copies, etc.
- **Description:** Over the course of the semester, Ss collect Internet texts that they have observed and participated in, for inclusion in a portfolio, which can be print or online in the form of a personal blog or wiki. Ss annotate each entry with reflection, and may also include analyses and reports on a certain number of texts.

Exploration & Analysis

Genre Report

- **Objectives:** Ss develop awareness of the social, genre-based features of a particular text they have chosen to analyze.
- **Description:** As a class, in pairs, or individually, Ss learn about the concept of genre and conduct an informal genre analysis of a particular text. The report can be printed, posted in a blog or portfolio, or presented in class.

Lexplorer

- **Objectives:** Ss develop awareness of basic corpus-based lexical features of a text of their choice, focusing on word frequency, co-text, and collocations.
- **Description:** Ss first create a mini-corpus of Internet texts and conduct a frequency analysis on it using basic corpus tools. If a large corpus in the language of study is available, Ss conduct a concordance activity on words that they have analyzed in the frequency analysis.

Net text Comparison

- **Objectives:** Ss develop critical awareness of the differences and similarities among Internet texts in regards to genre and corpus-based frequency profiles.
- **Description:** Ss compare and contrast Internet texts by considering the analyses they have completed for the genre and Lexplorer activities.

Genre Report: Student Instructions

Find a text you are interested in. This can be a webpage, a chat transcript, a messageboard thread, or even a video. Read (or watch) the text once through to get a general idea of what it's about. Answer the following questions:

1. Who is the author of the text?
2. Who is the intended audience?
3. What is the medium of the text?
4. What is the purpose of the text? What do the author, audience, and medium have to do with the purpose of the text?
5. Identify the parts (phases or stages) of the text. How do they help you understand the meaning of the text?
6. Identify several vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structures that are typical of this genre of text.
7. Identify one or two social and/or cultural references you need to understand the text.
8. How typical do you think this text is of its genre? Why or why not?
9. What would be an equivalent American English text of this type? How do you think it might be similar or different?

Explorer: Student Instructions

Create a small corpus of 5 Internet texts from a single genre you are interested in. You should copy and paste them together in a file, but remember to remove the text that is not part of the content. Save your corpus as a MS Word file.

Text name and URL	no. of words
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Genre:	total words:

Part I

A. Frequency analysis

Using the corpus tool that your teacher provides, do a frequency analysis of your text.

1. What are the most frequent words?
2. What are the most frequent function and content words?
3. What are some words that you already know? How frequent are they?
4. What are the 10 most frequent words that you don't really know?

B. Word analysis

Search anywhere in the list for 5 words whose meanings you would like to explore. Go back to the file and search for each word. Answer the following questions for each word:

1. How frequent is the word in your text?
2. What part of speech is the word?
3. What are the parts of the word?
4. If the word is part of a chunk or idiom, what is it?
5. What are some other words that seem to occur around this word?
6. What sort of feeling (positive, negative) do you get from the word?
7. What other words, e.g. synonyms and antonyms, does this word remind you of?
8. Without looking it up, what do you think the meaning of the word is? Why do you think so?

Part II: Concordance analysis

Use a corpus concordancer to search for your words in a major corpus that matches the genre of your text if possible. Create a set of at least 10 concordance lines for each word. Answer the following questions for each word using its concordance lines.

1. What parts of speech can the word be?
2. Does the word occur as part of any chunks or idioms? If so, what are they?
3. What words can collocate with the word?
4. What grammatical features (gender, number, tense, aspect, voice) can occur in or with the word?
5. What grammatical constructions can the word be part of?
6. How many different meanings can the word have? What are they?
7. What sort of feelings (semantic prosody) can the word have?
8. Consider the usage of the word in your text. Which usage and meaning in the concordance is it equal or most similar to?

Net text Comparison: Student Instructions

Briefly present a few texts you have analyzed to your group. After everyone in your group has presented, answer the following questions together.

1. Which texts are of similar genres? How does the genre contribute to their meanings?
2. Compare text authors, audience, medium and purpose. How are they similar and different?
3. What can you learn about the target culture or society by comparing the texts?
4. Look at the Lexplorer reports from several of the texts together. Which words are of similarly high frequency across texts? Which are unique to your texts, and why do you think so?

Choose a text from one person in your group to write a comparison report using the questions above to guide your main ideas.

Participation & Creation

Post and Participate

- **Objectives:** Ss participate in an existing Internet practice in the language of study, and to observe and document any reply or reaction their participation creates.
- **Description:** In this activity, students participate in an Internet practice of their choice in the language of study, e.g. comment on a YouTube video, a news messageboard, or participate in a chat. Ss document their participation and reflect on any reaction or follow-up that their participation generates.

Internet Design Project

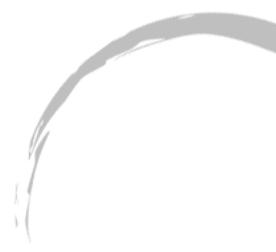
- **Objectives:** Ss work together to create a digital product in the language of study, based on their new understandings of Internet texts and practices. The final products should be posted online if possible, and reactions and comments noted.
- **Description:** Ss work in groups to create an Internet product, e.g. a video, wikipedia entry, podcast, or fanfiction post, of their choice and design in the language of study. Groups post the product online to an actual Internet audience.



Thank you

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