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Theorising Twitter Chat

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on sociological, psychological and pedagogic theories, this article offers a conceptualisation of Twitter and Twitter chats as a continuous multilogue within communities of practice and/or communities of interest (CoP and CoI).

This article examines the collapsing and increasingly overlapping boundaries of formal and informal education and locates Twitter chats within this overlapping area. Furthermore, conceptualising Twitter interactions as multilogue conversations, the article offers an object relational conception of knowledge, knowledge generation, and learning and a dynamic interpretation of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the notion of More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) to offer a theorisation and pedagogic perspective in relation to Twitter and Twitter chats.

The article concludes by considering some of the implications of such a theorisation for individual and professional identity, learning and pedagogy.

Keywords: eLearning and Blended Learning; Twitter Chat Pedagogy; Twitter Psychology; Social Media Identity; Discourse Analysis and Twitter

Introduction

In the dialogues of Plato, there is a superb depiction of educational practice in ancient Greece, representing Socrates talking to students who are seeking to learn. Although it could be argued that the conversation is about assessing higher virtues of discourse, the dialogue is never about assessing the pupils as aspiring philosophers. Instead, the main focus of discussion is to advance thinking rather than establishing the expertise of the learner.

This emphasises a focus on learning and its social, participatory and relational dimensions and highlights the importance of active and dialogical conversation as an exploratory and experiential process in teaching and learning. Fast forward to today's Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Mayer (2005a, 2005b) argues that the presence of social cues and a conversational style in virtual/human–computer/"online" interaction facilitates the same sense-making efforts that are activated in corporeal/human–human/"offline" interactions.

However, communication and conversations involve coding and decoding of verbal and non-verbal symbols and the ability to relate to or imagine the meaning intended by one's interlocutor. This is a necessary condition for achieving mutual understanding that is foundational to learning and knowledge generation processes. In the words of Dewey, conversation and language compel us to consider the perspectives of other individuals and to proceed from a viewpoint that goes beyond strictly personal stance and aims to construct a perspective that is common to both interlocutors in a "conjoint undertaking" (Dewey, 1938/2007, p. 52).

Dewey goes on to distinguish between one-way passive listening and positive transactional listening-in conversation. This "conjoint undertaking" between interlocutors is "…a trans-action: both are concerned in it; its results pass, as it were, across from one to the other" (Dewey, 1938/2007, p. 244).

Furthermore, social learning theories (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and theories of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) as well as heutagogical perspective view learning as social activity and self-directed by the learner.

Therefore, given the communicative potential of social media and the conversational nature of Twitter, it seems intuitive that it could hold positive potential for education and learning purposes. Indeed, Twitter and Twitter chat can be conceptualised as a continuous multilogue.

Twitter and Twitter chat

Twitter is a web-based Internet chat client (web-based Short Message Service system – 'SMS') that provides a social network structure and a medium for information exchange/flow, allowing users to post short messages/updates, called tweets, of 140 characters (similar to SMS messaging but using an Internet browser), and to subscribe to (i.e. 'follow') other users to receive postings/updates (tweets). Although users can post a sequence of tweets to convey a message, the 140 character limit of Twitter affects expression. Tweets can be directed (include the Twitter ID of one or more Twitter users) or can be without referent.

Some key features of Twitter include:

Hashtag: Denoted by a word with preceding '#' symbol (e.g., #MHChat, #SWSCmedia, #MentalHealth, #HigherEd), the hashtag is a user-defined word that functions as a search word and is used to tag/label tweets. It is used as a tool for grouping tweets, information and/or conversations.

Reply: Reply is a function provided by the platform to respond to a tweet by clicking on Twitter's Reply button. Replies appear in sequence below each tweet, enabling others to easily follow the conversation thread.

Retweet: Retweet forwards a tweet to one's followers and is similar to e-mail forwarding.

Mention: Mention acknowledges a user with the symbolic '@'

sign but without using the Reply feature. Unlike the use of Reply button, Mentions are not linked in a conversation thread.

Direct Message (DM): Direct message (DM) is a private message (tweet) that is visible to the sender and receiver of the DM only. This is meant for private communication/conversation, although some users use this function to send self-promoting or commercial messages.

For example, some Twitter users use the DM to create an image of popularity by asking other users to retweet a given tweet or to tweet a given reply to their message. This is an example of Goffman's (1959, 1981) back-stage activity for creating a "front" or a given image and appearance on the front-stage (visible to the public) and raises questions about the authenticity of the given user's social identity and their messages (tweets).

Twitter Chat: Twitter chat is a thematic multilogue (i.e. a many-to-many conversation focused on a given theme/topic) often situated within a community of practice (CoP) and/or community of interest (CoI) (see Megele, 2014a, 2014b, 2014d). Twitter chat and its participants usually use a hashtag to tag all tweets. This enables the chat participants to search and follow the given hashtag, giving wider visibility to tweets and enabling all the chat participants to see/ read, reply to and engage and converse with other participants. See Figure 1.

Twitter is an asymmetric social network and therefore, users can follow other Twitter users who may or may not follow them back. Once logged in, Twitter users see a stream of messages (tweets) that are chronologically ordered; this includes the user's tweets as well as the tweets posted by the other Twitter accounts that the user is following. Twitter users have the option to upload a brief profile description, with a maximum of 160 characters, as well as a photograph or an image for their account. This offers possibilities for "framing" and identity construction or self-bildung (Herder, as cited in Gadamer, Weinsheimer, & Marshall, 2004; Murthy, 2012; Megele, 2014c) as explored later in this paper.

While Twitter messages can be addressed to any Twitter user, bridging temporal, spatial, social and other divides and initiating a potential conversation, the asymmetry of Twitter follower and following creates a unique setting that is different from other social media platforms and is reflective of the perceived ('actual' or 'imagined') relational and/or power imbalances within the Twittersphere. Such power imbalances may or may not reflect the social or other differences between the users in everyday life and their lived corporeal experiences.

Twitter as a continuous multilogue

Multilogue is a many-to-many communication, where each message is addressed to more than one potential receiver and may be answered by more than one potential replier. Furthermore, each reply in itself is implicitly addressed to more than one potential receiver and may receive replies from more than one source. In twitter chats this is further complicated by the absence of turn-taking.

Turn-taking and a focused topical development are central to the coherence of conversations in face-to-face communication, and coherence of communication is central to scholarly debate and effective learning (Herring, 1999).

Therefore, the suspension of the turn-taking norms of face-to-face interaction in multilogues, such as conversations on Twitter and other digitally and/or computer mediated communication, offers unique challenges and opportunities. For example, it allows a broader range of participants to contribute simultaneously in "co-temporaneous" turns to the conversation and to develop multiple strands of discourse that merge, diverge, and re-merge to form a broader and richer conversation, while the "relative permanence" of tweets as textual artefacts makes it possible for individual participants to speak "at the same time" and yet to be "heard"

Figure 1 shows an anonymised example of replies, mention and hashtag

distinctly (Shank, 1993). The loose structure of such multilogue conversations, characteristic of Twitter and Twitter chats, has important implications for the chat process and its outcomes, as on the one hand, the lack of turn-taking allows for an increased number of participants, and an increase in number of each participant's postings/tweets, while on the other hand, the multi-strand nature of discussion broadens the scope of discussion.

Multilogue conversations can be a powerful tool for brainstorming, idea generation, idea development and other activities that may benefit from a wider engagement and broadening of communication base. However, such multilogue Twitter discussions may be less suitable for developing a focused in-depth discussion and analysis of a given topic.

Empirical evidence shows that users adopt their turn-taking practices to the medium (Megele, 2014c). But, while there is a rich and evolving repertoire of skills and range of apps to draw on for mitigating and remediating turn-taking coherence, topical relevance/ coherence is more difficult to remediate and remains a more challenging aspect of multilogue conversations.

For example, although two individuals may be in conversation about a given point, usually within the chat their tweets are interspersed with other participants' tweets. This means that there are often several tweets from other people in between each tweet from the two, or at times more, interlocutors. However, these tweets are ignored, and the parties continue with a focus on the given exchange, almost as if they were the only interlocutors present/ engaged in the chat. In other words, one person's tweet may be followed by a number of other tweets before the other person responds; however, the response is still directed at the comment which occurred prior to those unrelated tweets. Furthermore, many participants may engage in more than one multilogue about different related or unrelated points, in a quasi-co-temporaneous manner. The ability to communicate in this manner implies a process of filtering through a set of diverse tweets and 'unrelated' multilogues in order to maintain a dialogic exchange in the midst of a dynamic and much larger chat space.

This process can be simplified by a number of chat techniques

or apps that facilitate monitoring of multiple Twitter streams. Nonetheless, the ability for sifting through a rapid flux of information is key to carrying on this type of exchange, and that is a cognitive ability that most participants can develop/enhance by engaging in multilogue conversations such as Twitter chats.

Twitter chat as a community of practice (CoP) and/or a community of interest (CoI)

Social learning theories (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and theories of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) as well as heutagogical perspective view leaning as a social activity self-directed by the learner.

Most Twitter chats (e.g. @MHChat or @SWSCmedia) represent communities of practice/interest (CoP/CoI) focused on specific areas of practice/interest (e.g. @MHChat is an open access community dedicated to mental health). There are three common pedagogical threads to most Twitter chats, namely: (a) learning takes place as learners create/construct their own meaning and/or application of new knowledge (Megele, 2014a, 2014b); (b) learning is situated and is embedded in the social context within which knowledge is used/applied (Lave, 1993; Megele, 2014a, 2014b); (c) learning is a collaborative process and takes place between learners coproducing knowledge at a self-directed level (Hung, Tan, & Koh, 2006; Murthy, 2012; Megele, 2014a, 2014b).

Collaborative and self-directed learning require "a sharing of information in relationships . . . [that] promotes new growth for each participant" (Jackson & MacIsaac, 1994, p. 24) and that each participant is able to meet their own learning needs. Indeed, Twitter chats and Personal Learning Networks (PLNs) offer flexible learning opportunities that enable learners to meet their own learning and development needs (Megele, 2014a; 2014b).

Audience and framing

All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify.
(Goffman, 1959, p. 72)

Indeed, each time a tweet, or in general a discourse, is produced, it is produced in relation to, and for an audience, be it an identified actual audience with well-defined expectations or an implied or imagined audience constructed or hypothesised by the actor and/or speaker. Furthermore, various empirical researches suggest that identity negotiations are particularly powerful in the presence of an audience (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011; Greenwood, Long, & Dal Cin, 2013). Therefore, an understanding of how audiences are framed is key to any understanding of discourse.

Messages on Twitter, except when directed (addressed to specific user[s]), are being sent to diverse, ambiguous, and/or imagined audiences by tweeters. In addition, considering the rapid flow of tweets in a Twitter chat, each message can be accompanied by several other tweets from other chat participants. This seemingly non-directed and chaotic communication, however, does not negate the foundational element inherent in all communication, that all tweets are directed at some form of audience.

Heidegger's (1977, p. 325) concept of enframing can help describe this dynamic:

Enframing means the gathering together of the setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means the way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology and that is itself nothing technological.

Therefore, if we think of enframing as a mode of representing the world, as Heidegger suggests, enframing limits the range of considered 'allowable' experience. In other words, it limits the possibility of the world, because it is aimed at constraining or rewriting, or even prescribing, how the world is to be perceived. Nonetheless, we can never be free from enframing, although it 'filters' 'our world'.

Subjectivity and collapsing boundaries of social media

In general, tweets are public and therefore, as a rule, have a larger potential audience than may be immediately visible/identifiable. Furthermore, social media, Twitter and Twitter chats allow people to share ideas and hold each other's attention across physical and social divides. Therefore, it can be argued that given the assumption of an ambiguous unquantified audience that is greater than the number of active participants in each discussion, identity negotiations are particularly powerful on Twitter.

However, although there are abundant expressions of subjectivity on Twitter, due to the 140-character limitations of each tweet and the 'interactive immediacy' of the medium, narrative framings of subjectivity on Twitter are often brief expressions such as "Feeling great today…." Given the link between language, thoughts and feelings, such sound-byte reductionism of subjectivity cannot be without psychological, social and cultural implications.

Drawing on uses-and-gratifications theory, the main function of informal and sustained online communication is the establishment and maintenance of affinity groups. Furthermore, there is evidence to believe that richer media are more effective/conducive for sustained communication and for establishing and maintaining affinity groups. However, interestingly enough, in spite of the ready availability of such richer media interfaces (e.g. audio and visual), most users tend to choose text-based platforms (Duggan & Rainie, 2012; Shiu & Lenhart, 2004).

Face-to-face, video or audio encounters, be it corporeal or virtual, are more taxing as they require close attention to verbal and non-verbal cues (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002). Furthermore, such interactions entail greater social presence and require immediate reply and therefore offer less control in editing or framing of the interaction, while text-based communications entail less self-exposure and therefore lower attention and scrutiny. As a result, in text-based communications, users are better able to pace the conversation (have greater reaction time) and even multi-task during the conversation. Furthermore, the text-based communication allows users to distanciate self from social media interaction and maintain greater focus on self and own intentions (McKenna, 2007; Walther, 2007), and this is accentuated by the self-disinhibition effect of online textual engagement. While this means reduced pressure on self, which can lead to greater and more spontaneous self-disclosure, the rapid pace of a Twitter chat requires quick replies, hence a higher cognitive demand, which can result in less nuanced consideration of the other (Megele, 2014c). This latter point is further influenced by the 140-character limit for each tweet.

The silent/lurking observers

In addition to the actual tweets that are posted and tagged/visible in a chat, there can be said to be a 'background audience' on Twitter, and in the chat, that are the 'silent observers and that create a voyeuristic context for performances within the Twittersphere. This is because, although one cannot know the exact number of people observing a conversation or noting a tweet, it can be assumed that there are more audiences that are logged into Twitter who are aware of a chat or tweet than the actual number of people engaging with the conversation or the chat. The assumption of such an invisible audience has important psychological and behavioural implications for Twitter and tweeters, for tweets, either consciously

or unconsciously, are also directed toward this audience. Therefore, even without their direct engagement, this imagined audience influence the tweeter's self-awareness and manner of engagement on Twitter (Megele, 2014c).

Twitter, identity, and performativity

An important feature of Twitter and Twitter chat is that the flow of messages, even when they are directed messages both within the chat and on Twitter in general, tend to move toward the direction of multilogue rather than dialogue (two-people conversations). Indeed, frequently, directed exchanges (Tweets addressed to one or more users) may attract comments from other users and this may expand the conversation to a larger and larger group. At times when there is increasing number of users interacting with the same message, the Tweet's 140 character space becomes the limiting factor for inclusion of other Twitter participants in the tweet. This, in essence, is the very nature of multilogue conversations and the quintessential characteristic of Twitter interactions and conversations. This is a reflection of social media's paradigmatic shift from individual to social, where all objects including the conception of individual self are "social" (Megele, 2014c). This emphasises the relational and social dimensions of self and the Other and the conception of knowledge (we will expand on such relational conception of knowledge later in this paper).

Furthermore, considering the increasing integration of social media in everyday life and the increasing affinity/merging/fusion of "virtual"/"online" and "corporeal"/"offline" identities of social media users, combined with relational hierarchies of Twitter (Megele, 2014c) in addition to the regularity of participants' engagement in Twitter chat, social media users tend to present a consistent narrative and default social media schema (see Megele, 2014b, 2014c).

Drawing on the earlier discussion of subjectivity, the assumed presence and the indeterminacy of an implied 'background' audience exceeding the number of participants who are actually engaging in a Twitter conversation, or a Twitter chat, means a framing of audience as a psychologically projected 'other' who are always watching but never individuated through interactive engagement or exchange (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011; Greenwood, Long, & Dal Cin, 2013). Such a conceptualisation of Twitter and its audience has important normative potential that adds a performative and a ritualistic dimension to tweeting and tweets (Toma & Hancock, 2013). This performative dimension enwraps the Twittersphere.

The above resembles a gestalt and embodies Goffman's (1981) "talk" defined by the three themes of "ritualization", "participation framework", and "embedding" (Murthy, 2012). In this sense, tweets become 'metasocial' commentaries and stories that in Bauman and Lyon's (2012) "confessional society" tweeters tell themselves about themselves (Geertz, 2010).

A relational conceptualisation of knowledge, and thinking of Twitter/Twitter chat as a continuous learning conversation

Learning in the ancient Greece, and in contemporary indigenous cultures, was/is extensively informal. An apprentice craftsman or an aspiring philosopher would work for a master craftsman or a philosopher to learn a skill or knowledge, and once they had/have learnt or gained a given skill or knowledge, then they would move to a new master practitioner or philosopher to learn further skills and gain further wisdom. The master practitioner/philosopher was the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), and learning was bound by the knowledge and expertise of the master practitioner/philosopher (MKO) and the face-to-face relationship between the apprentice and the master/expert. Hence, craftsmanship skills as well as

knowledge and philosophy were limited by the availability of master practitioners, and that apprenticeship required exclusive relationship with a single MKO (master).

In reference to the above and the discussion in the previous sections, and drawing on the Kleinian object relation theory, we consider knowledge as a representation of the external world, a representation that mediates between the object and the subject (i.e. the subject's 'subjective' internalisation of the external world). This means that such representation only exists in relation to the way it is used with respect to the external object. Therefore, this internalised representation (i.e. knowledge) is not fixed and owned by the subject but finds meaning in its use in relation to the object. Hence, such representations are relational and are distributed/present in terms of communities and systems of activities with others (in this sense knowledge is social). This correlates with Goffman's (1981) notion of "ritualization", "participation framework" and "embedding" since it is 'in relation to'. In this sense, the learner's internalisation of knowledge (representation of external world) is only possible in the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) and in relation to the use/application of the given representation (knowledge) and with respect to the object and in collaboration –"conjoint undertaking" (Dewey, 1938/2007) – with others (MKOs) until that specific representation (knowledge) is internalised and the learner/apprentice is able to use/apply that representation (knowledge/skill) in relation to the object independently (without the help/support of the MKO). Such internalisation is situated since it mediates between the subject (learner/apprentice) and the external world; hence, it is subjective. Indeed, the apprentice's work may be similar to the master craftsman's, and the apprentice may one day become 'better' than the master craftsman; however, their knowledge, skills, works/artefacts are unique and not identical.

The above conceptualisation of knowledge and learning implies that a MKO can be any source of learning that enables the learner to develop a given knowledge or skill located within the learner's ZPD. Indeed, today's learners can develop new knowledge, understanding and skills in many different ways – through formal studies in a school, by reading a book, watching a YouTube video, observing or conversing with a peer, listening to a podcast, reading a blog, interacting with other professionals, practising a given skill or participating in a Twitter chat, etc. In this sense, learners can access a multitude of MKOs who can support/help them to develop their potential knowledge, skills and capabilities within their ZPD. Indeed, participants in Twitter chat make their knowledge visible in the form of tweets and become active coprosumers and coproducers of knowledge (Megele, 2014a, 2014c, 2014d, 2015b). Furthermore, considering today's rapid technological transformations, and drawing on Goffman's (1981) concept of embedding and the relational definition of knowledge and learning (Megele, 2014d), such multitude of more knowledgeable others results in a continuous expansion of the learner's ZPD (i.e. every internalisation of a representation of external object expands the learner's capacity for new internalisations, hence, expanding the learner's ZPD).

The above conceptualisation of knowledge and learning offers a dynamic and ever-expanding view of Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) ZPD.

Overlapping formal, non-formal, and informal education

There are at least five important trends that result in increasing overlap between formal, non-formal and informal education.

First, the increasingly overlapping boundaries of private and public as well as personal and professional spheres implies that what was considered professional activity (e.g. education) can now be carried out, at least partially, in personal and private domains (e.g. through e-learning, distance learning, informal discussions, etc.).

Second, the advent of e-learning and continuous/lifelong learning

have resulted in new structures, organisations and systems of teaching and learning that have redefined further and higher education and university in terms of their vision, mission and operations.

Third, a learner-centred focus and the new and evolving conception of knowledge, learning and education and their significance and value in addition to the notion of continuous lifelong learning/education have transformed the demand for and the processes of teaching and learning.

Fourth, the evolving techno-social context has impacted both the notion of education and the avenues and venues/opportunities for learning.

Fifth, the changing employment market and its demands for new, relevant, and continuously evolving knowledge, skills and expertise requires a new approach to education and learning.

I have explored the above elsewhere, demonstrating the changing mission and vision of higher education (Megele, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2015b); however, for the purposes of this paper, suffice it to say that the above have resulted in an increasing overlap between formal, non-formal and informal education.

Drawing on the above discussion, we can conceive of Twitter chats (e.g. @MHChat, #MHChat, @SWSCmedia, or #HEChat) as thematic multilogue "talk" (Goffman, 1981) within this overlapping boundary between formal, informal and non-formal education (i.e. learning CoP and CoI), offering a learning environment rich with many MKOs.

Conclusion and implications for further research

Social media have transformed both the medium and the message and have changed our every notion ranging from communication and connectedness to relationships, friendships, knowledge and learning. Therefore, this article has aimed to offer a theoretical foundation and a pedagogical perspective for a critical appreciation of Twitter© and Twitter chats.

Turn-taking and the incremental way in which the participants in a conversation construct and perpetuate common thread of discourse/topic in social interaction and collaboratively 'reflect in action' has been considered essential for developing a coherent, and in-depth, understanding of the point in discussion (Clark, 1996; Enfield & Levinson, 2006). Therefore, the absence of turn-taking in multilogue conversations raises questions about their impact on the processes and experiences of learning and their outcomes.

Thinking about professionalism and representations of professional identity in terms of professional/organisational conversations and the various decisions, discussions, information exchanges and debates from an interactionist perspective, "each conversational action is treated as both displaying an understanding of prior and projecting subsequent conversational actions" (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p. 288). This allows a coherent understanding of the action and its organisation. So, what are the implications and the significance of non-linear multilogue conversations for organisational communication, hierarchies, organisational accountabilities, management and decision-making?

Learners and practitioners develop their professionalism and professional identity as well as contextual skills as they learn to connect the personal to cultural and societal. This highlights the importance of a more critical and holistic understanding of identity and e-professionalism. What are the implications and consequences of this new and fast-evolving sociality for professional development and identity?

Lacan (1981, p. 20) posits that "unconscious is structured like a language". Therefore, the substantially different 'language', sociality and culture of social media and Twitter cannot be without effect for individual and social identity and learning. But, what are some of the implications and impact of the substantially different 'language'/ conversations of Twitterverse on individual psyche, identity,

relationships and correlates? (Megele, 2014c, 2015a).

Will the use of Twitter lead to greater individual awareness and a more empathic sociality? Or will Twitter result in a 'solipsistic sociality' where lived experience is structured and defined by fragmented dramaturgical displays (Goffman, 1959) of egocentrism upon the stage of Bauman and Lyon's (2012) "confessional society" (Megele, 2014c, 2015a, 2015b)?

What are the implications of the above as well as other new and emerging technologies, such as Google Glass, for learning, learning processes and learners' experiences, and their outcomes?

How can new pedagogies leverage the potential of multilogue conversations and the new modes of thinking, brainstorming, decision-making and sociality to support and enhance learning and learning processes as well as learner experiences and their outcomes?

Some of the above questions are the focus of the author's current research. However, it is the intention of this article to serve as a catalyst to initiate a 'multilogue' conversation aimed at a more critical and in-depth appreciation of social media, and Twitter, and their uses, applications and implications for identity, self-production, learning and professional development. It is the author's hope that future research will raise further critical considerations and will empirically answer some of the questions raised in this article about communication, learning and individual psyche, relationships, social and professional identity, turn-taking and synchronicity and language and meaning-making.

In an increasingly connected society, education and learning go far beyond enhancement of an individual's cognitive abilities; indeed, in this context cognition occurs in social relations, and knowledge is developed in internalisations though cognitive and experiential engagement, using social tools for thinking and learning as a "conjoint undertaking" (Dewey,2007; Megele, 2014c, 2014d, 2015a, 2015b).

There is a passage in *The school and life of the child* from *The middle works of John Dewey* in which Dewey (1899/2008, p. 21) states:

> *Some few years ago I was looking about the school supply stores in the city, trying to find desks and chairs which seemed thoroughly suitable from all points of view – artistic, hygienic, and educational – to the needs of the children. We had a great deal of difficulty in finding what we needed, and finally one dealer, more intelligent than the rest, made this remark: "I am afraid we have not what you want. You want something at which the children may work; these are all for listening.*

In a world where through the use of Google Glass the usually private act of surgery is transformed into an interactive learning opportunity for about 13,000 learners from across 115 countries (Smith, 2014), education and learning seem to have gone far beyond the above observation. However, perhaps the adoption of relevant e-pedagogies and methodologies for effective use and applications of social media in education and learning and as an open tool for continuous knowledge generation and identity transformation (Megele, 2014c) represent an even more significant and transformational transition than the move from 'listening' to active learning.

Biography

Claudia Megele (@ClaudiaMegele) is a Senior Lecturer and CPD & Post Qualifying Programmes Leader at the Middlesex University, and the Head of Practice Learning at London Borough of Enfield. Claudia developed the ENABLE model (Enquiry & Networked Active Blended Leaderful Learning Ecology) for effective use and implementation of social media in higher education and learning. Claudia's research interest is focused on the future of identity, workforce of the future, development of new pedagogies and use social media for mental health and therapy. Claudia's currently funded research include the study of 1) the impact of social media on identity, mentalisation, empathy, relationships and correlates, and 2) workforce of the future and the development of leaderful leadership and professional identity.

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