

Discourse Community Ethnography

What is the discourse community?

I am examining the American Shudokan Association which is a network of Karate schools (dojo) in the PNW

What is the objective and main goal of the discourse community?

This is sort of up for debate since the death of our association head in 2017, but largely it is to preserve the legacy of Morris Mack, while also encouraging and supporting young black belts in the pursuit of college education.

How does the community intercommunicate? What genres do they use to communicate with each other?

The community uses a wide variety of intercommunication mediums including facebook, email, phone call, video sharing, and Instagram, and texting. The younger experts tend toward the use of google docs as a genre as well, along with texting. Facebook seems to bridge a gap from young to middle generation experts with older experts using email and phone calls. All experts and members use F2F training as a primary genre.

What types of information are they communicating? What do the genres do? How do they make the discourse community function?

Generally, they are communicating at least on some level about the goal of the organization, whether they interpret that to be preservation of lineage, or expansion and development of curriculum. The genres facilitate our discussion of history and movement.

What are the conventions for the genres? Conventions are rules for how genres are structured. Think about the rules for structuring a horror film or a comedy. Those rules are conventions.

Conventions for the training genre are the most structured and are usually dependent upon group size. One-on-one training tends to take a different structure than group training. It also changes if the group consists of peers, or experts to novices for example. All training session begins with some kind of formal greeting ceremony (these are brief). Training usually includes warm ups, drills, and a focus on either where we come from or how we are changing and facilitating better movement from a variety of perspectives.

What other mechanisms does the community use to communicate?

This community is both very focused on written and overt communication, and also communication through behavior rather than language. Often, who bows first, what you wear,

who you partner with, who you claim as an instructor, and who you claim as a student communicates your values and your allegiances. The discourse community is heavily allegiance based.

What style guides does the community use? APA, MLA, etc.

The community does not have a specific style guide like APA or MLA, but there are customs about when you italicize foreign words and when you do not. There are also conventions regarding abbreviations, of which there are many.

What kinds of research does the community conduct? Field? Labs? Texts?

The community conducts research primarily through training and seminars.

How do you become an expert in this community? Experiences? Degree(s)?

Experience is a hard thing to define in this community and also seems deeply impacted by the other people you are around. Experience can be signified by experience, the respect that other people show you in front of other people, and the rank you hold in our style and in other styles of martial arts (some of us overlap and have multiple black belts. Or don't hold rank in another style, but have enough experience to garner expertise.)

What are some specific terms and lexis that the community uses and what do those terms mean? Provide at least 5 terms that are specific to the community.

ASA, SPT, K1, K2, P1, P2, KW, YSK, etc.. the community loves acronyms and initialisms. There also is a strange overlap of anglicized Japanese and English. The Home Dojo has a strange mesh of Spanish and English and Japanese. Many of the acronyms have to do with Kata and are result of needing to write the names of kata quickly during testing. School names are also frequently abbreviated. Another one is the phrase Ganbatte is used in conjunction with the Japanese word for yes instead of the frequently used *Oss*, in other styles.

Draw some final conclusions about the discourse community. What did you learn about this community from these questions and answers?

Initially, I thought this community might be unstable because of the flux in student population and the imbalance between experts and novices, alongside the adversarial nature of how the DC is approaching goals. However, upon closer inspection, I think the stability might be indicative of growth rather than decay.