

Interview Transcript:

E: OK I am so this is Elise Kautz-Holbrook doing their discourse community work. Quick question, does everybody in the room consent to being recorded?

All: Yes

E: Fantastic. Can you please state your names starting here

JC: Jake Cowan

N: Nicholas Arnold

B: Rebecca Crabtree

NJ: Nathan Jensen

S: Suzanne Lacour

E: perfect thank you guys so we are talking about discourse community and we're talking specifically about the community of like the ASA American Shudokan Association within the broader concept of karate. So all of you are black belts in the association which is why you are here and we're just gonna go through a few questions to talk about whether or not this community qualifies as a discourse community in general so the work that we're generally looking at has to do it, comes from John Swales' Discourse Community piece and he lays out like six different aspects of it and six different factors that make up a discourse community. So the first thing that they talk about our common goals and so what, if any, are the broadly agreed common goals of the Association?

S: I love how we're starting with a soft ball question. Should we consult the manual? We have a manual.

E: do you think it's a community in general?

All: Yes

E: OK cool cool, what makes it a Community?

NJ: For common goals I think within the ASA it would be probably to practice both traditional karate but also effective

E: Do you think that applies to all come to all of the schools in the ASA because there are multiple dojo

JC: there's a variety of work and it constitutes effective self defense versus traditional martial arts and each dojo kind of fall somewhere along the scale but the fact remains that we generally are at least in communication about that we'll get together for trainings. Even if they have different perspectives on what constitutes effective self-defense or what constitutes traditional karate, we still at least talk about it and work together towards some sort of common understanding.

E: OK cool does anyone want to add onto that? So like what are the goals that we share in common with enter the association the broadly agreed-upon goals.

S: so let's go really, really easy here. It is the passing on of the oral tradition of our martial arts style end of the physical forms and the philosophy behind it. It is the passing on and teaching of the agreed-upon curriculum and forms on a rank and each appropriate way up to a certain rank. We've all pretty much agreed we have a teaching curriculum. We all have a hierarchy of seniority. In that sense, we are passing on a tradition, a hierarchy and a curriculum.

E: cool

N: Within the ASA, what the curriculum is made up of doesn't really seem to have much consistency. Um just because of some people- I mean there's only so much communication with

me if I can be had between two people that own their own business. Especially if those people own multiple businesses. And their own teaching styles and how they were raised affects it a lot. Like if I go to another dojo they might have a huge part of their curriculum that I've never seen and vice versa. They might have never seen something that I grew up with.

E: that is happened to you with European Blocking right Jake?

JC: It did yeah, I went to teach for another dojo and while European blocking is actually something that was a part of the original ASA curriculum understand it, my dojo kind of split off from there and so we didn't do that curriculum. We did a large portion of what is considered traditional ASA curriculum on but not that that being said. Sensei Holeman does have authority within that hierarchy to deviate from that, and we still have addressed that it exists even if it's not a specific part of our curriculum. So it's still addressed even if it's not part of what makes rank.

B: The head of the style generally goes to the different testings, too. To be there and to make sure it's up to what she's ok with. And that way she's keeping in communication with those dojo.

E: with that kind of in mind, can we transition to the next question which has to do with how the community- like what kind of mechanisms the community uses for inner communication among its members. Like how do people communicate within the community.

N: You asked that question kind of fast. Could you repeat it? I definitely wasn't listening.

JC: the communication of the ASA

All: *Laughter*

E: Yeah that's true yeah what, like what mechanisms does the community use for inner communication between members .

B: Facebook

NJ: yeah email

E: Facebook, which is surprising to me because I'm not on Facebook

S: Same!

E: And so without you guys I'd be fully disconnected from the whole genre.

N: Tobey's very active on facebook

All: yeah

NJ: Yeah Tobey like lives on facebook. Yeah yes email

S: Phone calls, tournaments

E: it's testing

S: seminars.

NJ: I would say probably primarily you're you have- for me- from my understanding of it the three main ways people communicate The ASA are through Facebook, face-to-face ,and phone calls. With email being like a minor but I don't know how active- since I'm not part of the top brass.

S: I would say email for the olders and texting for younger.

E: do you guys take videos of yourselves or of practitioners and send them to one another?

NJ: yes I take videos of myself. I don't usually send them to people.

JC: Nathan I have sent you a video of me doing sai stuff.

S: I have organized the entire video catalogue of what we had in our- like all of the original camcorder footage. I've digitized it and put it in an archive. So we've definitely started expanding that.

N: so yeah I indirectly send videos of myself to James. I post them on my private Instagram account because I don't wanna force them upon James to critique. If I my post myself doing something, he's definitely going to critique. I don't openly say yeah critique this. So I give him the option. So he never has to.

E: yeah that's interesting so-

N: It's just me being non-confrontational.

JC: like there's direct feedback like what you're talking about, but I do the same thing there's like a kata exchange Facebook group that's not specific towards the ASA but when I post stuff there I still get input and feedback and also from people outside the ASA but also from people within the ASA.

B: like feedback from tournaments- like when I was competing, I had James as a coach and there was a lot of communication there. Going to different tournaments, I was able to get the opinions of different dojo people, like from the different dojos and like get help from others who I wouldn't have necessarily gotten help from if I wasn't at tournaments.

S: I feel like with the Association specifically there's always a black belt and dojo owners meeting at every tournament. Behind closed doors and that's like- it's at testing and tournaments and there's always A Talk about whatever is going on that we need to like take care.

E: I suppose we normally have meetings, um, like the counselors normally have meetings going into the lead up to Enbukai, and it serves a similar function.

NJ: yeah

E: of what we're looking for and we give each other feedback about what we're doing in that kind of thing.

N: I feel like the fact that, um, like a lot of Emerald city, Zane's dojo, and Yakima, help out at tests even the color belt tests a lot. There's a small more connected highway that way. And there's probably a lot of feedback going back and forth.

S: I feel like the formal happens at the tournament and the testing day. There's a degree to which there's a lot of informal over text and phone call and Facebook.

B: a lot of times there's a lunch or dinner or something after those events and where its just karate talk.

S: You put five beers into Sensei Rocha and it is game time.

E: thanks Suzanne.

S: I apologize for nothing

JC: Like when Nick was talking about this dojo helps this other dojo there are times- because you can have somebody representing a Dojo saying this to the ASA and then you have other people it's not quite like freelance but they're individuals working within that context. I bounce between a bunch of dojo testing, now I'm teaching for another job but it's not as a representative of karate West, which was my home dojo.

E: right

JC: right so I'm not going out and say hey this is Karate West contribution to this, even though if sensei Holeman were to do the same thing that would be Karate West's contribution

E: right that makes sense I kind of feel like James has a similar thing with Wenatchee where like that's where he's from but he's not representing Wenatchee right now. He's kind of his own entity in a few ways. Indeed yeah. Um. OK cool so with that in mind do you guys think that actually we kind of already covered it. So we- part of like talking about discourse community that discourses communities tend to have different Methods of communication and they use those methods of communication for feedback critique and improvement and like to provide information one another but within those communication methods you also have genres like we talked about Facebook and all of us that other stuff so we're gonna kind of skip through that section and move onto the specific language used by the ASA, which is kind of a confusing question because um the ASA tends to I think perhaps use in the Anglicized version of Japanese and there's kind of a hodgepodge of Japanese and English slammed together in a really fascinating way um, but we're talking about like a specific lexis unique to the ASA. So like terms acronyms stuff that the ASA uses that maybe other people don't use or there's less overlap.

JC: one that's coming to my immediately that I think it's pretty common will refer to the kyoku kata as K1 K2. We have these-

E: We stole that from you and we started hanging out with you, and like- yeah you specifically, Jake Cowan-

JC: Me?

E: Yeah and now we call them K1, K2, K3.

S: We never did that

JC: You're welcome.

S: and the pinans.

E: I think everyone writes P1

JC: I do that when I judge

E: I think everyone in the ASA writes P1 P2, but we didn't verbalize them as K1-K7 until we started hanging out with you.

NJ: Kind of like people don't write down Shin pa tan.

E: SPT

N: I write SPTN

E: Do you really?

N: It's all the consonants

E: I see we were thinking I think the concert of the first syllable. Like the first consonant of each syllable

JC: Unless you're me for some reason like you'll never see it that way you write out things and a lot of written abbreviation that are spoken.

E: why do we end up with written abbreviations instead of spoken ones

B: because were trying to like-

S: because the box on the testing sheet is tiny.

E: there it is



N: It's space for writing and time.

E: What do you mean by time, Nate

N: usually especially- it's not as bad nowadays- you know huge tests, four in a day to day we're trying to get through it quickly so when you're writing things down you're like what your kata. So you write these things down so you can get to the next person. You still want to make sure that you're getting accurate information and connecting it to the student, but you gotta get to the next person so you can get all the information and get moving so you can get through the test so you can go to the next test so you're done before nine at night.

E: yeah

S: This was before your time YVC.

E: I think they were at YVC!

General uproar as they figured out who had been at testing at YVC (It was all of us).

E: we're not that much older than them! Now you're dating all of us that's what's happening here.

N: this might not apply because I don't know much about the japanes, but how specific is the use of the word pinan verus the word Heian?

JC: for a while I remember and you guys can correct me on this, but I remember a video of Sensei Mack from the 70s or 80s performing like Heian nidán. And that was a while ago but we purpot to teach traditional Okinawan karate and the pinan kata were essentially originally called pinan. When Funakoshi propagated karate to mainland Japan, changed the name to Heian. Right. So Pinan is "traditionally Okinawan" which is why we refer to them as Pinan. A lot of martial

arts styles nowadays Shotokan specifically but you'll Heian. They're the same forms in essence but the naming kinda denotes a different lineages and history.

S: do you know what year that was?

JC: we watched it at Gasshuku two or three years ago.

E: it's like the difference between tonfa and tunfa.

B: the Japanese. We use Japanese, but the different dojos use the Japanese differently. Like you might here kumite to kamaete

JC: we recently changed our Aisatsu to bow in ceremony too.

E: I was just thinking about that for a long time no one knew the word aisatsu. Right. No one knew the word aisatsu, but like yeah and our understanding of like the meta language that we use at YSK now is different, like we talked about posting out differently, clinch differently.

JC: that's specific to YSK.

E: That's what I was wondering if that's not an association discourse thing that's a school specific thing.

S: you and James both work together to revamp our curriculum and modernize it that's really only stayed at YSK and maybe to an extent to Wenatchee because James is in Wenatchee.

E: he's not in Wenatchee. He's in Ellensburg.

S: there's gonna be that little bit- yeah

N: There's a little more modern- I mean I don't have a lot of experience at Zane's dojo., but like he wrestled so he uses more modern combat effective ideas and words.

B: Sensei Rachel too, did BJJ and so had BJJ in her dojo.

E: cool yeah

JC: this is a little beyond just the ASA too especially when it comes to bunkai or the self-defense application of kata you see people like Patrick McCarthy or Ian Abernathy who are in no way associated or affiliated with the ASA, bring new ideas about effective self-defense with bunkai. Others may have been- those ideas are beginning to filter out amongst the ASA. Maybe because a lot of us will credit I'll credit in Abernathy with stuff I guess, but the people we teach probably not, and so it kind of becomes like oh this is something we are doing as opposed to oh this is something that we learn from this person outside of the ASA.

S: there's a vin diagram because the ASA is a specific branch of martial arts.

E: it's a specific branch of Shudokan. It's a discourse within a discourse within a discourse guys

S: Layers to the onion. So clinch isn't in the ASA yet, but we could drag it in by force.

N: You could say you could arm drag it in.

General uproar at the joke.

E: that's a joke that won't make sense to anyone but us.

JC: the ASA we like referring to the American Shudokan Association, right and that the Shudokan like the place the Shudokan was where the karate of Kanken Toyama came from which is where we kind of trace back our lineage but the first person in our lineage who kind of

was connected to Toyama is Walter Todd who trained in Aiki and Wadoryu and I think a little bit of shotokan

N: I think he did Judo.

JC: He did judo. He was also the first I am American to get a Shotokan dan rank. And he was given rank in shibucho by a branch director associated with Kanken Toyama without actually training with him, right he sent video and pictures at the time- he sent pictures to Toyama and then Sensei Mack, right, trained under Walter Todd. He trained I think with Ozawa if I think of Shoto Kan. Like we as a group are not specifically Karate from the Shudokan even though that's kind of where our name is coming from. Some people like Sensei Tobey went back and trained with people who are directly Shudokan and so it's kind of bringing in you know the Shudokan and Karate from outside of that system but it's all still the ASA. Y

E: Yeah which is a fun lexical nominal all on its own and. Like one final thing about this before we like move on to the last piece guys- I think, and you should tell me if I'm wrong, because I'm throwing this out there as a proposition, I think one of the things that is kind of unique to the ASA is that we cannot resist abbreviating dojo names

General Assent

E: so like YSK CWSK WSK KW you know like, we can't like help it.

S: We like three letter acronyms.

E: Well not always. The school will have like a totally normal name like Evergreen and we all call it Bothel. You know what I mean? Like we cannot resist changing Dojo names.

S: School of karate feels redundant. We're all schools of karate. We just need to know where you're located.

E: That's fair. With that in mind.

JC: but there's Eastside Family Karate and they're EFK.

S: we just need to know where they're located.

JC: Eastside means nothing though

E that's true

JC: like we are Karate West and they're Eastside Family Karate, and we're more east of them.

S: you know I know that this is a community, because no one outside of this room knows what the hell is going on

E: yeah valid point

S: it's like there are degrees of existence, like you are a real purist if you know everything going on in this conversation. If you know 90% of this you can be in the club.

E: that's a great transition, Suzanne, about what does membership within the community look like and what does expertise within the community look like and whether or not there's a reasonable ratio between novices and experts.

N: That seems like a dangerous topic.

E: that is a hot topic yeah,

N: Like very controversial.

NJ: that almost could get us in trouble

E: controversial yet brave

N: if after this conversation some of us go missing, this question will be why.

E: anyway membership within the community, what does that look like. We'll start with membership. also we should start a podcast.

All: yes.

NJ: you read my mind

B: Membership comes in like different forms. You pay to like go to class

S: how do you first become part of this community in the first place. You turn up for your one free class and then you join and you keep going. That's step one.

E: so are you really a member of the like the discourse community if you're a white belt.

JC: yes you are starting to look—

E: ooooh, Nick disagrees!

NJ: I also disagree

JC: I agree.

N: So you sign up for your first day you get a gi and a white piece of cloth around your waist. That suddenly means you can take part in the conversation with all these people?

S: you are a novice in the discourse are at the very bottom of the totem pole learning

JC: one of the first things that happens when you're a new person in a class is you start to learn that the bow in ceremony and you learn the words that go along with it like the lead student yells kiotsuke and your taught to come to attention, right, you learn what that means you learn rei signifies, oh I need to do this when this person gives a command and it's not like a normal command in they're not telling you bow, they're using a specific term which is Japanese, but also used within the ASA

S: and also when I say that you're part of this discourse, I don't mean that you're leading the Discourse or making arguments within this discourse. To be part of the discourse in my mind- it means that you were able to listen and learn in that discourse. You don't need to have a firm opinion or be speaking like a novice is learning. You can be part of the discourse and just being a student in the classroom who is learning.

JC: so would being able to lead the discussion entail expertise?

S: that's when you're starting to get into expertise. Like the more comfortable you are and the more information you have to like start to be in those, right- like I joke that I do not feel like a professional adult until I could sit down with people I view as professional adults that have a conversation with them we're at no point was I lost and it many points they were like that's a good argument, but I'm thinking oh I am one of you. I'm a card carrying member of this community now. I can't leave.

E: that's a truly interesting point because there are theories that you can't ever truly leave a Discourse. Nathan what do you think?

NJ: I think it depends on your definition of member like textbook- by the, by the terms on paper- if you are a member of the discourse because you are a part of the ASA because you're paying on your dues. As soon as you start paying dues as a part of the ASA you are part of the technically, you are technically a part of the ASA.

JC: are you a part of the ASA if you're training at an ASA dojo but doing like with, Nick mentioned earlier jujitsu under one of the instructors?

E: oh shit.

General disagreement

NJ: to use that in YSK there's an Aikido group. No one in the Aikido group is associated with the ASA, except for the instructor, Quinten who happens to also have a Shudokan black belt.

E: The sword group has the same thing except the ratios flipped, where everyone's a member of the ASA too except Guillermo, who has no affiliation with karate whatsoever

S: are kyu ranks part of ASA?

JC: Some dojos do. Some give you a kyu certificate. Some do not.

S: ours does. To my knowledge.

N: that's new. It used to be you only got certificates if you were over the age of 13.

E: oh dude enbukai though that's an ASA only thing. Yeah yeah you only get to go if you if your school is ASA affiliated not if you even use you specifically are ASA affiliated.

S: if you at least train at that school you must know or vernacular well enough to be able to function in that environment because you don't want to send like a taekwondo kid who's never been into our school up here cause they're going to be like staring at us the whole time like, I don't know the words, I don't know the formalities, I don't know the people.

N: even someone who is Shudokan but isn't part of the ASA would be super lost



S: yeah and at least they would have the benefit of like knowing people presumably they came with from their school and I've heard a couple of those terms.

JC: that's happened at Gasshuku. yeah yeah the adult training camp has had that happen as well we're people like know somebody like sensei Toby and have messaged them over Facebook about this event and they'll fly in and they may not be ASA affiliated but now they're kind of because they're paying to go to the gasshuku and train with ASA, does that make them ASA?

NJ: I wouldn't think so. Just going to one ASA event doesn't make you ASA.

JC: But going to one class does.

N: you stole the words out of my mouth.

E: I meant Nathan I think disagrees with that proposition.

NJ: Yeah I don't think going to one class, no- I think probably when you're regularly paying for your membership then you can say-

E: OK what about the people who are in active but still pay dues

JC: I have not paid Karate dues in over four years. I do have certification of rank though.

S: I have a proposition update on the issue.

E: can we go one at a time guys, I'm sorry.

S: So I would say that my original stance was you take your first class and start going- I would say that with the assumption-and I realize this assumption is wrong now- this is someone who is going to continue training on through black belt and stay with the community long term. I'm

thinking of that initial step on that pathway. That's kind of my bad. You're a member as soon as you start with the understanding that you'll finish even though there isn't a finish.

E: So your membership is retroactive if you stay with it.

S: Right so that's not going to work either. I would say there's almost like a graduated scale. Like when we get roughly an orange belt who's been here for a year and is really keyed in and you look at that orange belt and you're like, you're really keyed in and we know you're listening, like you're a member now.

E: I kind of agree with the orange belt-

S: I've had some green belts and brown belts that are so not interested in being there, that I look at them and I'm like I don't know if you're a member because I don't think you want to be here. So there has to be an active, like I have chosen to be part of this community.

B: ok, I think there's a difference between being a member and being part of the community. Cause like, being a member and not keyed in. Sure you're a member, you're paying your dues, you're going to classes, you're learning, but you're not engaging in the community. But once you're engaged in the community, you're active in it. You're not- like say, you have Jake who has left his dojo, but hasn't left Karate. He goes to different dojos. Or James who has left his dojo, but still is active in karate.

E: Indeed.

B: That's my thought. Once you're part of the community- you're doing things for the ASA.

E: so what makes somebody an expert with the ASA specifically?

JC: that's why we have shodan, like black belt. Isn't that what means, that someone has spent enough time.

S: No, that means you've met the minimum criteria. Like the only expert in the ASA- and I feel like some people might disagree with this- is Sensei Kara. The head of the association is the only person I look at who I'm like, you get to tell us what's up about the association.

E: What makes somebody an expert? Like the authority to tell us-

N: I feel like the fact that the ASA is its own community has less to do with our martial arts and more to do with our specific history and lineage of people that we've learned from. Because there's millions of people around the world that do martial arts, and we're not much different from them, but there's a specific history and knowledge that only a few people at this point know, like Sensei Kara and Sensei Tobey, and we often look to them for information on how people that handed that info down would want us to use that information. So like you can know a lot about martial arts or even karate and shudokan, but you might know a lot about our specific shudokan, which largely came from Hanshi Mack. So in a way being an expert in this community has not much to do with martial arts, but your understanding of our lineage.

E: that's a hot topic

JC: I like that.

S: I agree with that. When I was saying in my brain it's only Sensei Kara, that ties directly into what you're saying. In my head, it's always been defer to the highest ranked individual. For a long time that was Sensei Mack. Now it's Sensei Kara because he's passed away. I'm only doing that because to me that's like the head of the association in knowledge, but I don't think that's necessarily like what is expertise. That's what I'm naturally inclined to say because it's a safe answer.

B: I think so too, as like, as the views change within the ASA, the people with the higher ranks they might have conflicting views, and so, you go with the one who's more involved. Because

you have people who train, but they aren't involved in the community. Then you have people who are-

S: We have Sensei Zabel who is not training right now, but outranks Sensei Rocha and is providing more say even though Sensei Zabel does outrank him.

E: Participation is a key factor-

JC: Participation and instruction as well seems to be a common factor.

N: You can't really provide an accurate view of how our association does things if you haven't like been like, if you don't know what we did about it yesterday and the day before.

B: Even like if you're not necessarily teaching, but say you are involved in the planning, or the administrative work where you are dealing with the ins and outs of what's happening at the dojo. Like for a while Sensei Dawn wasn't teaching but she was the front desk person. She was in communication with the manager and the owner and things like that. And so she was an expert in what the different goings of the dojo were. And since you know she has rank and things like that she is a part of the community but she is an expert in a different position

S: I feel like what you're saying is there's multiple check boxes for expertise and we start counting up how many you have. Actively training, actively has rank, actively has been at events. Is training today. Like there's boxes.

NJ: There's expertise in different areas. You have to- it comes down to what you mean by expertise within the ASA. If we go off of our definitions, knowing the history, active in the community, things like that, the only expertise is Shihan Kara, because she has the history and is active. Shihan Rocha has the history, but isn't really active.

JC: Is it qualified by how prolific you are throughout the community?

NJ: Maybe? I don't think prolific is the word I would use. But like it's like with tiers. Shihan Kara is active and has the knowledge, but doesn't teach.

E: she hates teaching.

S: How widespread is her reach, that's the question you're asking.

NJ: But she has- she can tell anyone anything and they will listen because she is the authority. You have Sensei Dawn, who again isn't teaching many classes, and isn't as well known in the community, but she knows a lot about the specific dojo we work in and she's keeping her on the surrounding community so while she's not, doesn't have influence among those dojos, she knows about the goings on.

E: I don't know. I think she has influence with Wenatchee at least.

NJ: at least, yeah.

N: I think Dawn is a good example of like what can make an expert and what doesn't have to make an expert in a community. At least in the YSK community- what rank is she?

E: She's a shodan ho.

N: Yeah, I outrank her and there's nothing I feel like I can tell her ever. There's nothing I could ever tell her to do or that she's doing wrong. There's no information I have that she needs.

General laughter.

N: rank in a way kind of- I mean if you don't test, that doesn't mean you don't deserve a certain rank.

E: See we've talked about getting rid of tests, I would want to if only because my mom should not be a shodan ho.

NJ: No she should be a godan at least.

S: What amazes me is that what we're all saying here is that we don't know what expertise is, but we know it when we see it. WE can't define it, but we know it when we see it.

N: So she doesn't have much rank compared to the other members of the community, but her knowledge of every individual student and every person that's involved in the teaching and basically every cog in the system that is YSK, she knows inside and out, and you kind of don't really need to go by any rank. You don't need to quantify anything. You just have to look at the contribution.

E: Ok. Cool.

B: You mentioned that, but she too has an insane amount of martial arts knowledge. The late night talks just sitting around the dinner table. I'd ask her this, and she'd just go into it. She does her research. She reads books, and came with me to tournaments, and we'd have conversations about movement afterward, just body movement and things like that. She knows what she's talking about. She has an insane amount of knowledge.

E: Yeah, you're body just moves differently in you mid-sixties.

B: I don't think rank- rank can sometimes be an accurate measure of what you know, but I think a lot of times it's not.

NJ: I thought of this as almost a little childish, but the starwars cartoon the Clone Wars.

E: Oh dude, it's so good.

NJ: There's a character, Captain Rex. He's talking to a padawan, who is the lowest ranked jedi, but she still outranks him. As a padawan she's a commander and he's just a captain. So she says something about outranking him once and he says, to me, experience is greater than rank. Like experience outranks everything. Like in the case of Dawn. She doesn't have the physical, like the paper to show rank, but she has more experience and knowledge than most people. That outranks her physical belt.

S: I think it's also her engagement.

E: So here's my query, so like the word Sensei just means one who's come before in Japanese, so is expertise within our specific discourse community dependent upon not where you are, but where you are in relationship to other people?

General assent

E: Like I'm not an expert in this particular peer group, but like in relationship to the intermediates, probably could be considered an expert. Is that a fair way to phrase that?

General assent.

JC: That being said, the fact that you can- you have- I think you have expertise in both arenas, but you have more influence and authority with the intermediates. The fact that you can engage with us at this level implies expertise.

E: Does that imply expertise for the entire group since everyone is equally participating? I would argue that it does.

JC: I would say so.

N: I think it's hard- never mind that's not related.

E: So this is the final question, is there a reasonable ratio between novices and experts in the community?

N: I think if we go by original definition, we've got one or two people who are experts, and if we start loosening that definition and include people like Sensei Dawn and others who are at her level, it's still pretty thin compared to all the students in all the dojos.

JC: I'm interested in seeing not necessarily the ratio between experts and novices, but the rate at which we turn novices into experts. Because like, as instructors- like Suzanne was saying, someone is a member of the discourse provided they stick it out. And at that point, they're still a novice. They might get their black belt, but they're still a novice in the discourse, but what we as experts do to involve people in that way in which they can contribute to the discourse varies between dojos and it also like, I lost my train of thought, somebody pick it up.

S: Ok, I'll go. The ratio question. Which I'm interpreting to say as whether we have enough experts to enough novices. I will argue, fluctuates a lot. Like right now, we have a shortage of teachers compared to students at YSK.

E: But weirdly I think we have a high ratio of black belts to non-black belts, but we have a lot ratio of instructors to students.

S: right but we- when we start breaking it out like that it depends on what we've determined to be expertise, which we've already said, at best is nebulous. We know it when we see, but can't define it. It's going great. So like expert is nebulous, novice is nebulous as well so in terms of ratio, so if we look at the dojo and we're like, it's empty in here. We need more novices. That's when we know we're out of balance. When we look in the room and we say there are too many students for the number of qualified instructors. There are too many questions to available experts. We have moments of flux, because our community is so large. There is always going to be- like when we're at tournaments we always joke we don't have enough black belts to run



tournaments, but then we'll be in the middle of testing, and we don't have enough, but then at Enbukai we have too many counselors.

E: Oh yeah that's true.

S: it depends on where we're at. Are we looking for black belts, are we looking for teachers, are we looking for counselors are we looking for students? Who are we looking for and at what point. The community is too big for there to be one ratio.

E: Because we've had non-black belt camp counselors, but you don't have non-black belt judges.

JC: And we've talked about expertise in different capacities-

S: Right, nebulous.

NJ: you know the same way in the dojo with the desk. We have black belts who run behind the desk, we have non-black belts currently who run behind the desk. It's- and though- that goes into another rabbit hole I won't go on- I think saying it's a flux, depends on which experts are we talking about. You can't say expertise in general because I think everyone has a level of expertise in something. And while it might not be within the ASA- I would say that- it's easy to see the novices in the ASA, I think personally. I think that who the experts in the ASA are kind of harder to describe.

E: I kind of wonder if sometimes too if people who are potentially experts are experts because of their ability to participate in the discourse but sometimes either wait to be invited or choose not to participate. Or they limit their participation to specific events and contributions.

S: I agree with that

NJ: then you have the people who are really loud in conversations, but aren't really experts but because of how loud they are in the conversation it makes it almost seem like they are.

JC: But part of expertise was contribution so does their contribution have to be correct?

NJ: I think there has to be a balance of maybe not correct. I don't think correct is the word. I'd have to think on it a little more. I think right now as I sit here, I think for me, it's not so much about correctness as it is a balance of participation and-

S: I would argue that you're limiting yourself to one concept of correctness. When we're talking about like if their contribution is not necessarily correct for the discourse or not appropriate at the time, we're not allowing the discourse to move forward. We've got multiple ways-

E: or does it further the goal of the discourse

S: Is that what you were trying to get at?

NJ: Kind of yeah. I think part of it is just language- a lot of the thoughts I have in my head are hard to put into words. I think language is stupid and we should all be able to communicate through thoughts and emotions.

E: and on that note, are there any final thoughts?

General negation

E: Thank you guys again for your help.

Phone Notes:

The goal is to promote college and education to our young black belts and to preserve Morris Mack's Shudokan.

It is not socially acceptable to recognize expertise either to someone directly or about one's self in any way other than a request to train.

Expertise: knowledge that furthers the goal: preservation or progression of the style. James 10/26/20 phone call.

Preservation expertise utilized to further progressive goals (think Jake Cowan): James 10/26/20 phone call.

Expertise depends on the value system of the people in an individual group: James 10/26/20

Lexis: *power*, (a meaningless word: James 10/26/20, it has so many meanings that it is, in fact, meaningless).

Have you watched the video????

Awareness of ourselves of a group: “The group itself does not understand its identity.” “Vast divergences in the beliefs around what the community is.” “Discussion about the discourse is considered negative.” “Totally considered disloyal to question the discourse.”