Plenary abstract:
Cultivating values: Exploring knower-building in the humanities through Legitimation Code Theory

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SFL's longest and most significant collaboration has been with the sociological framework of code theory. This collaboration has consistently driven conceptual advances in both frameworks and expanded their explanatory power. In recent years, the modern development of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton 2014) has intensified this collaboration with SFL and prodded and provoked it into further developing its framework (Maton and Doran 2017). LCT has offered a complementary perspective on a range of issues, such as how language and broader semiosis builds knowledge and how we can use this to enhance SFL's long-standing interest in educational linguistics. This has driven the development of new concepts in SFL such as 'mass' and 'presence' (Martin 2016, Martin and Matruglio 2013) and has forced reconsiderations of long-standing components of the theory such as field (Martin and Doran in press).

Much of this work has centred on explicit knowledge-building such as we find in the sciences. It has looked in detail at how fine-grained technical knowledge is pieced together in classrooms, textbooks and across a range of semiotic resources. In contrast, less focus has been directed toward knower-building – how dispositions, values, and moral and aesthetic stances are developed – such as often found in the humanities. In this paper I will explore such knower-building through the LCT concept of 'axiological constellations'. Axiological constellations offer unique insights into the intricate configurations of meaning that underpin conceptual development oriented to values, stances and dispositions. They also offer a means to see different readings of these meanings that may arise from alternate perspectives. Through this analysis, I will raise questions for how we can understand the highly uncommon-sense discourse that builds axiological constellations in the humanities from the perspective of SFL. Together, I will show how the humanities develop their ways of seeing the world and in this sense, progress their field. More broadly, by giving a perspective on this discourse from LCT, I will offer a complementary gaze for expanding the explanatory power of SFL.

References

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