

*Book Review****Doing Discourse Research: An Introduction for Social Scientists*****Reiner Keller.****London: Sage, 2013, 176 pages.*****Reviewed by******Linda M. Phillips******University of Alberta***

The realm of discourse research has expanded to include linguistics, the social sciences as well as various multimedia formats. This expansion has set off numerous new applications as well as new forms of analyses. Discourse analysis is a process whereby the characteristics of language and language use in practice are closely examined by the researcher for consistency, motive, ideology, and content. Discourse research requires a systematic scientific approach within robust methodological standards. Keller provides a thorough overview of the approaches in discourse research and the communication processes in different contexts. He then outlines the discourse research process from its theoretical position, the basic terminology, examples of the research questions to be asked by social scientists, and the interpretative-analytic foundations of discourse research including principled disclosure, clarity, and methodological rigour. Discourse is perceived as an object and qualitative methods must be adapted for the complexity of discourse which is more than text analysis. The last four chapters are meticulous, three of which deal with the doing of discourse research from getting started to the detailed analysis of data to overall results. These chapters are intended to be introductory and provide the basic principles of research as well as informed strategies based on established knowledge of the social sciences. The final chapter cautions against any attempt in discourse research to separate reality from society in the context of social science research.

Is there a place for discourse research in the social science of education? Yes, Keller indicates discourse perspectives have found a home in educational studies. Institutions have an educational discourse and schools are places of discursive such as writing, lecturing, teaching, showing, and non-discursive practices such as gestures, blessings, and manner of dress. These

discursive and non-discursive practices have come under the microscope because they present differently in the many varieties, choices, standards, and goals of learning environments within institutions. Discourse research is more common in educational settings in Europe and most texts are written in German. Nonetheless, there are texts in English that provide a window into the nature of the complex social settings that include people, situation, second language, or subject. All of which may vary in school settings from class to class, grade to grade, subject to subject and thereby alter the description of social relations and empowerment issues and concerns in classrooms. Discourse research affords new conceptualizations of language in practice through examination of the relationships between language form and function, social practices, learning, identity, and educational change. Whether the issues are placement of self, the effects of colonization, social construction of performance based on gender, semiotics, participation, or the multimodal world of classrooms, Keller provides a comprehensive treatment for educational applications. Applications of discourse research require a sound theoretical understanding of its many complex and interrelated parts. For a professional field such as education, Keller's book would serve as an ideal methods text for courses on graduate research methods. Previous work on discourse often grew from linguistics where the focus of study was on the direct influence of linguistic forms, in particular texts on social processes. There is now an inclusion of the interaction of multiple sign modalities. These include visual, verbal, and media, because we have grown to appreciate that knowledge and learning are inseparable and are socially situated, cognitively connected, and communicatively explored.

Discourse research is complex. Educators and researchers must be guided by their desire to attend to questions of learning and provide more comprehensive qualitative reconstruction and quantitative measurement evidence in order to inform instruction. In the case of inquiry learning, for example, there are longstanding questions about the substance of discussions in and about texts that are read and to be read and the barriers to understanding and dialogue. These questions are prompted by how to accommodate for differences in students' background knowledge and teachers' cognizance of, and accommodation for, students, in order that students might participate more fully in the classroom meaning-making process. At another level, policies from school boards or ministries of education are not outside the realm of discourse research. Policies and debates about the manner of schooling, the nature and uses of assessment, and the

integration of technology are also subjects for discourse research analysis. These must be researched in our attempts to advance understanding of the influences on learning, the forms of learning, types of learners, roles of learners, and whether learning occurs. One major obstacle that hinders the successful use of discourse in educational contexts is the quantity of text (statements, practices, dispositifs – artefacts such as buildings, technological equipment) through successive utterances which means the text is never complete. This incompleteness necessitates the need to decide on and set the boundaries of time, numbers of objects of investigation, questions of delimitation, context marking, and attributions for each and all objects under investigation. The interpretation of the data must be usable and acceptable under reasonable and justifiable circumstances. Discourse research is much more than text analysis. This method of research includes all forms of media as well as dispositifs. The successful doing of discourse research affords an interpretative analysis of educational contexts and situational meaning beyond most current forms of educational research. The key to successful doing of discourse research is to have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of discourse. Keller provides that in his book.

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