

University of Wollongong - Research Online

Thesis Collection

Title: The ontology of authority: a theory of "language in use" in classroom management

Author: Philip Fitzsimmons

Year: 1995

Repository DOI:

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material.

Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Research Online is the open access repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

1995

The ontology of authority: a theory of "language in use" in classroom management

Phil Fitzsimmons

University of Wollongong, philfitz@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses>

University of Wollongong

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material.

Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Recommended Citation

Fitzsimmons, Phil, The ontology of authority: a theory of "language in use" in classroom management, Doctor of Philosophy thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, 1995. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/1802>

NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

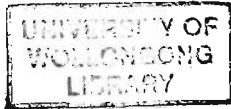
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

**THE ONTOLOGY OF AUTHORITY:
A THEORY OF "LANGUAGE IN USE"
IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**



**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the award of the degree**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

**PHILIP FITZSIMMONS
MEd Hons (Wollongong), MStudEd (Wollongong),
BEd (Wollongong)**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

1995

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is not so much the result of my labours, as it is the end product of support and encouragement provided by a group of very special people.

To Dr. Brian Cambourne and Dr. Jan Turbill for the opportunities they have given me, along with their guidance, wisdom and reassurance.

To Kylie Pickford and Lois Leitch whose friendship, computer skills and warped sense of humour made many of the hard times much more bearable.

To my wife Kate who has been long suffering and can now begin her own study after a ten year wait.

To Terry, Joy, Heather, Dick and Maxine who shared not only their time, effort and classrooms but themselves.

ABSTRACT

The aims of this study were twofold. They were:

- to illuminate the nature and role of language use that five teachers employed in their particular approach to classroom management.
- as a consequence of delineating this 'language in use', to develop a 'grounded theory' of classroom management which had been honed and polished in the real world of classroom practice.

Based in the naturalistic paradigm, this study utilised the hermeneutic-dialectic process as the primary methodological mode of inquiry. Beginning initially with the classic notion of participant observation, the hermeneutic-dialectic process provided the qualitative distillation mechanism whereby the intersubjective meanings of the respondents' language use in specific contexts could be constructed, and then reconstructed to form an interrelated whole.

Grounded in the data, a theory of classroom management emerged in which language was the key instrument of classroom management for these particular teachers. This thesis describes how language use provided the means by which a genuine relationship was formed between the teachers and pupils. This process has been depicted in diagrammatic form and described in detail.

This thesis concludes with a series of implications and recommendations for teachers, teacher training institutions and school administrators based on the principles emerging from this theory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
PURPOSE AND PARADIGM	1
Evolution of the Question	2
An Orientation of Terms, Concepts and Processes	2
Giving Voice to the Hermeneutic-Dialectic	6
RATIONALE	7
SITE, STAKEHOLDERS and SCHEDULE	9
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL	
UNDERTAKING	12
LIMITATIONS	16
POSITION, PLATFORM and PREJUDICES	16
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
INTRODUCTION	18
Reviewing the Literature: A Responsive Approach	18
Coming to Understand the Field	20
Investigating the 'Other Runners': A Summary of the Review Process	20
THE NATURE OF CHANGE	25
Paradigms and Paradigm Shifts	25
Paradigm Shifts that Have Led to Paradigm Stagnation	26
Paradigm Repair Through 'Critical Scrutiny'	29
Has Classroom Management Theory Stagnated?	33
The Emergence of Stagnation Symptoms	34
THE ACCEPTED LITERATURE DOMAIN	36
The Influence of Psychology in Education: A Mosaic Summary	36
An Introduction to Confusion	36
The Historical Cause and Process of Confusion	37
The Rhetoric and Reality of Paradigm Confusion	41
A Continuum of Classroom Control: Creating Clarity or	
Confusion?	43
The Child in Control: A Focus on Responsibility	43

Controlling Behaviour Through Assertive Discipline	48
A Brief Exercise in Critical Scrutiny	49
Another Change in Perspective: The Mosaic	
Reconstruction Continues	52
Critical Scrutiny of the Field	64
AN ALTERNATIVE MOSAIC	71
Language and the Development of the 'Person Paradigm'	71
What language Can Achieve	72
Language: A Means of Establishing 'Self'	74
Language: A Means of Sustaining 'Self'	76
Language: A Means of Sharing 'Self'	79
How Language Achieves a Transformation	82
Language: The Means of Developing a Relationship	83
Language: A Means of Continuing the Relationship	86
'Language in Use' in the 'Person Paradigm': A Process Ignored	92
CONCLUSION	94
A Paradigm Reframed	94
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	96
INTRODUCTION	96
RATIONALE	97
AN OVERVIEW OF THE 'CHANGING PERSPECTIVE'	99
DATA COLLECTION	101
An Emergent Design of Appropriateness	101
The Dynamics of the Process	101
ACTIVATION OF THE PROCESS: DATA COLLECTION AND	
ANALYSIS	103
Translation of Perspective into Process	104
The Inquiry 'Blade'	105
Participant Observation	105
Inductive Qualitative Methods	107
Use of Field Notes	107
Use of Video Tapes	109
Use of Interviews	109
Use of a Reflective Journal	111
Tacit Knowledge	113
Human as Instrument	113
The Development of Grounded Theory	
Through the Hermeneutic Dialectic Spiral	115
Coding the Data	117

The Ongoing Process of Theme Development: At the Macro Level	117
Theme Development at the Micro Level	123
The Elements of Expertise: A Summary of Grounded Theory of Classroom Management	126
The Process of Final Review	129
A Personal Review	129
Use of Co Researcher	130
Rigour Audit: An Accumulation of Adequacy	131
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY	134
INTRODUCTION	134
The Nature of the Chapter	134
The Organisation of the Chapter	135
SECTION 1 - THE SITES AND STAKEHOLDERS	137
Site A	137
The Participants	138
Terry	139
An Introductory Profile	139
Class Set Up and Organisation	143
Personal Philosophy	147
Joy	155
An Introductory Profile	155
Class Set Up and Organisation	161
Personal Philosophy	162
Heather	167
An Introductory Profile	167
Class set Up and Organisation	170
Personal Philosophy	175
Site B	178
The Participant	179
Dick	179
An Introductory Profile	179
Class Set Up and Organisation	182
Personal Philosophy	187
Site C	191
The Participant	193
Maxine	193
An Introductory Profile	193
Class Set Up and Organisation	194
Personal Philosophy	197

SECTION 2 - INTERPRETATION: TOWARDS A GROUNDED THEORY	202
Classroom Control: The Magnetic Mirror in Action	204
The Magnetic Core - The Revealing of 'Who I Am'	204
The Magnetic Force of Cohesion: The Revealing of 'What I Am' and the 'Way I Am'	214
The Language Revealing 'What I Am'	216
The Language of Openness	216
Self Disclosure	216
Spontaneity	219
Risk Taking	220
The Language of Care	221
Empathy	221
Confrontation	222
Respect	223
The Language Revealing the 'Way I Am'	226
Proxemic and Kinesic Types	226
Personal Appearance	227
Territory	228
Interpersonal Interaction	229
The 'Mutual Glance'	230
The Language Magnet: Creating a Zone of Engagement	232
CONCLUDING SUMMARY	233
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS	235
INTRODUCTION	235
A NEW AGENDA FOR CLASSROOM CONTROL	237
A 'Grammar of Motives' for Classroom Control	237
The Perception of Motive	237
The Enactment of Motive and Purpose	238
Act	238
Scene	241
Agent	242
Agency	244
Purpose	245
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	248
Implications for Teachers	248
Implications for Administrators	252
Implications for Teacher Training Institutions	254
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	256
PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS: A SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION	256

REFERENCES259
APPENDIX A286
APPENDIX B.....313

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Relationship Between the Literature and Data Analysis 20

Figure 2: A Concept Map of the Literature Related to Classroom Management..... 24

Figure 3: The Interrelated Process Involved in Developing a Grounded Theory 100

Figure 4: The Integrated Process of this Study 102

Figure 5: Data Collection Timeline 109

Figure 6: Themes Generated in this Study 126

Figure 7: Layout of Terry's Room 143

Figure 8: Layout of Joy's Room 161

Figure 9: Layout of Heather's Room 170

Figure 10: Layout of Dick's Room 183

Figure 11: Layout of Maxine's Room..... 194

Figure 12: The 'Magnetic Mirror' of Classroom Control 212

Figure 13: Model of Language Use..... 225

Figure 14: The Language Interaction Pattern 232

Figure 15: The Risk Taking Process 247