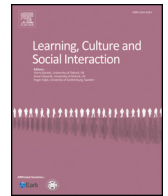




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Funds of Knowledge 2.0: Towards digital Funds of Identity

Adam Poole¹

Department of Education, University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Ningbo, China

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ABSTRACT

This article builds on the growing work on Funds of Identity by offering a conceptualisation of identity in relation to Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* which is then situated within the discourse on digital identities. I also suggest how teachers and researchers could use avatars, digital representations of online users, as an identity text for drawing on and constructing students' *Funds of Identity*. In order to illustrate this approach, I briefly sketch an ongoing class-based research project called The Avatar Project. Overall, this article reaffirms and develops the argument that the Funds of Identity approach is an evolution of Funds of Knowledge. This thesis is encapsulated in the phrase, *digital Funds of Identity: Funds of Knowledge 2.0*.

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1. Introduction

This article builds on two previous papers (Poole, 2016b; Poole, 2016c) which explored how the Funds of Knowledge² concept could be implemented in the People's Republic of China. In the first article (2016c), I identified a number of logistical and cultural constraints that might problematise the implementation of the Funds of Knowledge concept in the Chinese context. In so doing, I briefly explored the role that new technology might play in furthering social justice and the opportunities it might give researchers in accessing minority households. I noted that, increasingly, young people interact and communicate with each other via portable online devices which suggested that a household investigation as the main unit of analysis might overlook *Funds of Knowledge* in digital contexts. I developed this idea further in a second paper (Poole, 2016b) in which I explored the role that avatars, virtual learning environments, and hypertext could play in the development of online identities and their pedagogical application within the classroom. This article draws on and develops both of these ideas by offering a more robust conceptualisation of identity and a more developed explication of how avatars could be used as identity texts in the Chinese context. In so doing, I reaffirm the case for considering Funds of Identity as an evolution of the Funds of Knowledge concept by dialoguing with the literature on digital identities and literacies. My thesis is encapsulated in the phrase *digital Funds of Identity: Funds of Knowledge 2.0*. This phrase underscores the connection between Funds of Identity and Funds of Knowledge, but also emphasises that Funds of Identity is a significant evolution of the former concept because it is epistemologically commensurate with 21st century ways of knowing which are increasingly mediated by new technology.

As my thinking is predicated on the contentious view that digital devices increasingly mediate young people's social interaction and perceptions of reality (Miller, 2015), some explanation is required in order to justify my position. I make a crucial

E-mail address: zx17826@nottingham.edu.cn.¹ Permanent address: Room 420, Building 22, 258 Anli Road, Anting, 201,805, Shanghai, China.

² When discussing the brand or the concept of Funds of Knowledge it is customary to capitalise the phrase. However, when discussing the bodies of knowledge and skills that individuals possess (their *funds of Knowledge*) the phrase is written in lower case. I have also chosen to italicise the latter in order to make the difference more explicit. I have chosen to capitalise or not depending on how the phrase is being used. The same logic stands for the concept of Funds of Identity and an individual's *Funds of Identity*.

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distinction between what I call *analogue social interaction* and *digital social interaction*. Analogue social interaction refers to theories of social interaction and identity, such as Vygotsky's (1998) *perezhivanie*, that were formulated within pre-digital social contexts that took by face-to-face communication as the paradigmatic form of social interaction. In relation to classroom pedagogy, analogue social reality is characterised by 'technocratic notions of literacy' that emphasise the development of decontextualised skills which could be likened to '2-dimensional' literacies that are linear and paper based (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011). In contrast, the rise of new technology has led to what I call *digital social interaction* in which individuals increasingly interface with each other via hybrid learning spaces that allow for the embodiment of myriad identities, often in the form of avatars.³ This is not to suggest that face-to-face social interaction is obsolete, but rather to underscore the fact that social interaction and identity formation have been significantly transformed by new technology.

While there has been a move to explore students' *Funds of Knowledge* in relation to new literacies, such as digital practices, spaces and artefacts (Schwartz, 2015), the discourse on Funds of Identity has yet to fully capitalise on these digital methodologies, remaining largely committed to an *analogue* conceptualisation of social reality. I hope to add to the literature by suggesting that identity should be situated within the discourse on digital identity, thereby ensuring that the Funds of Identity concept is conceptually and epistemologically commensurate with 21st century social interaction as a digitally mediated experience.

1.1. Methodology

The literature search for this article was carried out using Google Scholar and ERIC and was supplemented by UNNC's library's "NUsearch" tool which provided access to library collections and articles not available via Google Scholar and ERIC. The following search terms were employed in the initial round of review: "Funds of Knowledge" and "Funds of Knowledge and the household". This search did not set any parameters in terms of year of publication as I wanted to get as broad a picture of the literature as possible. I also performed a second literature search using the same search terms, but focused on literature produced since 2012 in order to identify developments in the literature on Funds of Knowledge. As this round of review highlighted the emerging concept of Funds of Identity, I performed another search using "Funds of Identity" and "Funds of Identity and digital literacies". As this article makes use of secondary data in lieu of primary data, the literature search focused primarily on journal articles published in international peer-reviewed journals in order to ensure that the data appropriated was both valid and reliable.

2. Funds of Knowledge

Because the reader may not be familiar with Funds of Identity or Funds of Knowledge, I offer a short literature review of the two approaches. I have chosen to review these two approaches in the form of a narrative in order to show how Funds of Identity developed from Funds of Knowledge.

2.1. Definition of Funds of Knowledge

Within the Funds of Knowledge literature, students' *Funds of Knowledge* are taken to be "historically accumulated and culturally developed bod[ies] of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). The Funds of Knowledge concept is predicated upon a sociohistorical approach to culture that highlights the way people live culture in a 'mutually constitutive manner' (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). This dialectical approach to culture enables educators to become conscious of, and subsequently transform, their deficit thinking about minority students who in fact possess ample amounts of skills and out-of-school knowledge that possess exchange value within the mainstream classroom.

2.2. Household Funds of Knowledge

Within the discourse of the Tucson scholars, (Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Gonzalez et al., 1993; Moll, 1992; Moll et al., 1992; Moll & Greenberg, 1990) students' *Funds of Knowledge* are conceptualised as an essential part of the survival of the household and the local community. The household is seen as the main unit of analysis and the skills and knowledge therein are taken to be representative of the whole family. As part of a collaborative relationship between academics and educators, teachers receive training in ethnography and interviewing as prelude to visiting students' households in order to identify and document household *Funds of Knowledge* from a historical perspective (Gonzalez et al., 1993). The collected data is then used to construct units of work that help to bridge the gap between home and school.

2.3. Alternative sources of Funds of Knowledge: Towards Funds of Identity

Although this approach has been greatly influential in popularising the Funds of Knowledge approach, the emphasis on a single methodology has been critiqued for creating dependence on 'adult' household practices as the main unit of analysis (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Hogg, 2011). While children are an integral part of the household, they also create their own social worlds

³ Defined as "a perceptible digital representation whose behaviors reflect those executed, typically in real time, by a specific human being" (Bailenson & Blascovich, 2004, p 65).

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