

Mapping Instructor Movement: Use of Classroom Space as a Communication Act

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Storylines within discourse contain the imagined roles and interactions carried by the speaker (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015). Participants in a classroom act out their storylines and in doing so negotiate roles. Positioning theory describes these roles as “positioning” actors (i.e., teachers and students) with agency and authority according to their role (Anderson, 2009; Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015; Langer-Osuna & McKinney de Royston, 2017; Wagner & Herbel-Eisenmann, 2014). Researchers examine discourse within teacher/student interactions to understand the student experience in the classroom (Adger & Wright, 2015; Chronaki & Kolloosche, 2019; Herbel-Eisenmann & Wagner, 2010; Wagner & Herbel-Eisenmann, 2008).

Discourse (capital “D”) includes verbal and non-verbal communication that contributes to messages of stance, power, agency, and authority (Bishop, 2012; Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015; Razfar, 2012). Non-verbal communication in this context includes gestures, facial expressions, and body language. In this poster, we purport movement is also a non-verbal discursive act that communicates positioning, agency, and storyline.

Classroom observations were done in a variety of courses (mathematics education content, mathematics, and statistics) as an exploratory phase of a larger research study at a Midwestern university. The recordings were played double-speed to focus on teacher movement. Examples of mapping the instructors’ movements are provided below. Each map represents the first twenty minutes of instructional time for a single observation.

Every trip the instructor made from the front and around the room was given a unique color, and stops were shown as an “x.” Looking at a map, one can identify whether the instructor stops to talk with students, centering themselves within conversations or standing to the side, or if they walk, pivot, and return to the front. The proposed poster will demonstrate many of these maps with details of the positioning displayed by each.

The information gleaned from these maps provides a glimpse of movement-as-communication, which informs storylines and impacts student positioning.

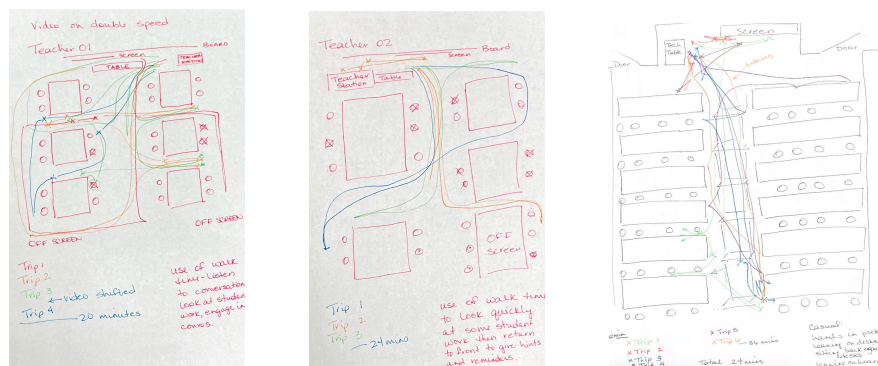


Figure 1: Examples of maps of teacher movement within the first 20 minutes of instructional time

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