

Learning to reason and argue: academic discourse as cognitive and communicative socialization

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Project summary

The background of this post doc project, which runs from 2004-2008, is a general interest in issues of human learning and thinking, and, more specifically, what it implies to appropriate institutional forms of knowing. In a complex and highly differentiated society (Hannerz, 1992), a broad range of knowledge producing and knowledge dependent institutions emerge. A fundamental aspect of this differentiation is the specialization of knowledge in terms of both the language and the material artefacts used. One consequence of this development is that such specialized forms of knowing become increasingly inaccessible to people in general. Membership in such communities, thus, presupposes extensive learning in terms of communicative and cognitive socialization. The overarching research interest of the present project is to analyse what kinds of learning and learning practices are involved in becoming and sustaining oneself as a person in an academic discourse community. The project empirically study the introduction and socialization of university students in two different academic milieus: Economy and Law.