Professional Vision
Charles Goodwin helps us learn how to see the practices by which professionals see their world.

The essence of professional vision
- “Central to the social and cognitive organization of a profession is its ability to shape events in the domain of its scrutiny into the phenomenal objects around which the discourse of the profession is organized…”

ALL vision is perspectival!
- Jack and Jill are friends
- Jack’s and Jill’s social world
- Comparing Jack to other men
- Gossiping
- Object of knowledge
- Domain of scrutiny
- Discursive practices
- Culturally consequential activity

Three important discursive practices
- Coding schemes
- Highlighting
- Production of graphical representations

Goodwin’s practices for seeing
- Knowledge (including his) is always created through the politics of representation.
- Goodwin highlights the things he wants us to scrutinize.
- He introduces a coding scheme
  - (highlighting, graphical representations, and coding)
- He uses video – his own and from CourtTV.

Archaeologists’ map
Ann: Give me the ground surface over here to about ninety. (1.7)
Ann: No- No- Not at ninety. From you to about ninety. (1.0) Oh.
Sue: Wherever there's a change in slope. (0.6) Mm kay.

Contested vision in cognitive science
- “anthropologically informed analyses of human action and cognition as socially situated phenomena.”
- break down “traditional dichotomies…such as the assignment of language and the material world to separate domains of inquiry…”

Archaeologists categorize the color of dirt

When the archeologists interact...
- “Each was dependent on the other for the moment-by-moment accomplishment of a common course of action.”

How do you say what color the dirt is?

Where is the cognition?
The high-level process of professionally competent categorization of dirt colors is brought into existence by the engagement of low-level processes (color vision, judging color matches) in cultural practices.
The social grounding of seeing and thinking

• “the ability to see relevant entities is lodged not in the individual mind but instead within a community of competent practitioners.”
• “the power to authoritatively see and produce the range of phenomena that are consequential for the organization of a society is not homogeneously distributed.”

Police beat Rodney King

What did you see?

• The answer determines who goes to jail and who walks free.
• What does it take to make seeing authoritative?

A policeman using a tool: the kick

A professional coding scheme

• Escalation
• De-escalation
• Assessment

Expert witness highlighting relevant objects in a murky world
Where is rationality?

- “the discursive procedures of a society structure what kinds of talk can and cannot be heard, who is qualified to speak the truth, and the conditions that establish the rationality of statements.”

Seeing in the world

- “[Professional] vision is not a purely mental process but instead is accomplished through the competent deployment of a complex of situated practices in a relevant setting.”

Categories

- “Through practices such as highlighting, coding, and articulating graphical representations, categories … are linked to specific phenomena…, creating a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.”
- “Categories and the phenomena to which they are being applied mutually elaborate each other.”

Tracing a post mold

Learning

- The practices of professional vision must be learned.
- “different ways of learning and their associated modes of access to the phenomena being scrutinized were constituted in each setting through the alternative ways that human interaction was organized.”

These are not special cases

- “the configuration of practices investigated in this article are generic, pervasive, and consequential in human activity.”
- “processes of classification are central to human cognition.”
- “the ability of humans to modify the world around them … is as central to human cognition as processes hidden inside the brain.”
Interactions of practices

• “In view of the generic nature of these practices, it is not surprising that they frequently work in concert with each other.”