

Project 1. Cognitive Diary and Everyday Task

Text Due January 17, 2013;
Reviews Due January 22, 2013

Goal: To see some part of your own life
through the cognitoscope.

Keep a "cognitive diary" for an entire day.

- Whenever you engage in an activity that requires thinking or remembering, try to notice it and jot it down (or dictate to an audio recorder). This will give you some idea of the cognitive texture of everyday life, and give you a collection of cognitive activities to choose from for the second part of the project. You are not required to turn in the diary itself. But DO record one.

Choose an everyday cognitive activity from your diary to describe in detail.

- Choose a single everyday cognitive activity from your diary to describe and analyze. The more events you have in your diary and the more diverse your collection of events, the easier it will be to choose one that will be easy to describe and analyze. Choose carefully. Choose an activity such that your analysis of it can demonstrate your mastery of description and cognitive analysis.

Criteria for Choosing an activity

- Keep it small and simple. It may be part of your job, or part of a recreational activity, or part of your everyday routine. It should be something that you would have done even if you were not taking this class. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP, OR A PRIVATE ACTIVITY, OR YOUR REASONING ABOUT IT. Do NOT attempt to design an "experiment." DON'T WORRY ABOUT HOW REPRESENTATIVE THE ACTIVITY IS.

Careful description

- Describe the cognitive activity as carefully as you can. Go slowly, be patient and methodical. Describe what actually happened in some particular actual event. Begin by describing ONLY those things that could be captured on video or could be seen by someone observing you.

Look for ecological assemblies

- An ecological assembly is a configuration of resources (some internal, some external) that together accomplish some cognitive task.
- Your activity will consist of one or more ecological assemblies. If you work carefully, you should be able to describe the external resources that are part of the ecological assembly. If this step seems difficult, then you may have chosen a cognitive activity that will be difficult to analyze. Consider choosing a different activity from your diary.

Describe actions and perceptions

- While developing your description of the external resources, describe what you actually did – the actions you actually took – with respect to those resources.
- I saw, I smelled, I heard, I noticed, I touched, I moved, and so on. These actions can shade into more complex cognitive acts such as I recognized, I realized, I remembered, I expected, I anticipated..

Avoid trying to read your own mind

- Even though you are describing your own activity, your access to internal resources is limited. It is surely more limited than we normally assume it to be. You may describe simple internal events such as remembering, noticing, imagining only if they are directly linked to observable behavior or observable external resources.
- Describe how the actions you actually took established relations among the observable resources.

Analyze your **description**

- In the analysis you will address the question: "What is "cognitive" about the activity?" That is, how does the activity accomplish a cognitive function such as **planning, problem solving, decision making, understanding, control of action**, and so on.
- Some of the questions you might be able to answer include the following: How does the activity take advantage of or interact with structure in the environment? If the activity is engaged in frequently (you will have to rely on your memory to establish this), is there evidence that it has become "routine " in the sense described by Lave and her colleagues?

Effects of prior activity

- Look for cognitive shortcuts, that is, ways of making a complicated computation into a simple one or ways of leaving out parts of an activity that previously seemed necessary.

Avoid mindreading in analysis

- In the analysis you will be tempted to describe "what was going through my mind" or "what was going on in my head." You **MUST** resist this temptation. Some of the processes that you might have assumed were internal will turn out on closer inspection to exist in the interaction of you with your world. Be sure not to miss these by prematurely looking for explanations in the head.

What should I do while writing my text?

- Meet these grading criteria on the course web page:
 - Documents: Proj 1 CPR Text Grading Criteria <http://thiscourse.com/ucsd/cogs102b/wi13/docs/78807871/>
- I recommend you write your text in a word processor on your own computer
- Save often while writing

What to do after writing your text

- Set up your Calibrated Peer Review account
 - Go to CPR login page
 - Select new account
 - Select your institution (University of California San Diego)
 - Use your student ID to enter the site
 - You will be issued a CPR ID code (write it down)
 - Choose a password (remember it)

And then...

- Log in to CPR using your user ID and password
 - Take the CPR tutorial and quiz
 - You MUST complete the tutorial before you can use the system to submit your assignments.
- Before January 17 submit your text to CPR
 - Format your text (html)
 - Save your text as .txt
 - Log in to CPR
 - Copy and paste your text into the submission window.

Then what?

- After January 17 and before January 22, Log on to your account on CPR
- Learn how to grade texts by applying the grading criteria to the three calibration texts
- Use the grading criteria to evaluate three texts written by your peers
- Use the grading criteria to evaluate your own text