

# Examining Asymmetries in Computer-Mediated Communication and Collaborative Learning Between Teachers

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# Examining Asymmetries in Computer-Mediated Communication and Collaborative Learning Between Teachers

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## 1. Introduction

This paper describes a set of two collaborative learning (CL) experiences, one between two seminars of 4th-year Japanese students at two universities; and the other, the learning interaction between the seminar supervisors. The students were put into contact with each other by the teachers in a project designed to spur them into writing their graduation theses from the stage of topic selection. The graduation thesis is called in Japanese *sotsugyo rombun*, its short form *sotsuron*, which still serves as the final requirement for graduation from a department in university. Thesis supervision is usually restricted to a seminar teacher in a department, and can be a trying experience for the teacher to supervise all of their students to write their theses.

The project came about when the two teachers, another native English speaker and I, discussed the myriad challenges faced to enable students to write their theses. We eyed computer mediated communication (CMC) as the means to usher in cross-collaborative learning between respective institutions, which hoped we could motivate students to work together on their theses. However, difficulties with the CMC and real-world concerns caused the student enterprise to come to a standstill by the end of summer. The aims of the project for the students were not realized as hoped, but reflection showed another dimension of CL had taken place between the teachers. This dimension was unearthed by analysis of the project through planes of symmetry and asymmetry postulated by Dillenbourg (1999), which also revealed another type of CL at work, a dynamic interaction between the two teachers.

## 2. Background

### a. *Sotsuron* Writing: Challenges Facing Students and Supervisors

In this section, I describe how *sotsuron* is regarded by students, and how non-Japanese

native English supervisors handle *sotsuron* guidance. In the Japanese undergraduate curriculum, among the very large number of courses that students must enroll in to graduate, the seminar, *zemi* as it is called in Japan, retains a special regard, being a designated course of a small number of students under the guidance of a professor in an area related to the professor's research specialty (Kelly, 1993, p. 176).

Tomei (2012) gives an overview of the history and factors that have led to the particularly Japanese form of the seminar in the junior and senior years identified as the *zemi*, and contrasting it with long form research writing in US universities. While in the US, these would serve as 'seminar' classes, in Japan, the *zemi* is a different entity, as reflected by the name, in that a seminar is rendered after the German word '*seminar*' rather than the English one.

A *sotsuron* guidance survey that Joe Tomei and Hugh Nicoll produced (Google document link provided on request) shows that graduation requirements vary considerably in Japanese universities. But they follow a pattern: students choose a teacher based on their research interest. The teacher supervises them over 1–3 years to produce a completed research paper of considerable length. The enterprise of *sotsuron* or graduation thesis writing is regarded by teachers as a precious opportunity to work closely with individual students. Students write theses in either Japanese or a language as stipulated by the department. They are likely to write theirs in English in a *zemi* supervised by a full-time native English speaker.

*Sotsuron* writing is generally viewed as an individual task characterized by one-to-one teacher-to-student guidance sessions, often outside of the regular class schedules. While the *zemi* serves as a canopy for student interaction, a thesis encapsulates each student's interest and analysis. Concern over their thesis progress causes students to develop a narrow-minded mentality, neglecting recourses that they might be open to in other circumstances. For students whose experience of academic writing is limited, even the first step of developing a topic focus can be paralyzing. While students are encouraged to seek topic advice from professors and library staff, and consult *sotsuron* guides (e.g. Sakai 2007), they do not seem to regard each other as possible sources for generating thesis topics.

For university educators who have a *zemi*, graduation thesis guidance is a solitary venture as well. Given the niche-focused orientation in the makeup of university departments, there is considerable resistance to collaborate between colleagues. I had no prior experience in thesis guidance, and there is no do-it-yourself manual on how to supervise *sotsuron* writing. When I asked for help from my colleagues on how to conduct *sotsuron* supervision, I was told I would learn as time went by. Supervision can be very difficult for English native teachers who are not fully fluent with the Japanese language, which constrains the possibility of their collaboration with Japanese colleagues. I am the only one in my department who requires theses to be written in English, while Joe Tomei is one of two in his department.

Another challenge identified was students' lack of familiarity with extended writing with research techniques. I was not required to produce a bachelor thesis for my undergraduate degree but had written a number of double-digit page research papers. Although students are introduced to paragraph and essay writing in their 1st and 2nd years in

university English language programs, it is rather unreasonable to expect them to move from writing a 1–2 page essay to a thesis of 20 pages. It is also unreasonable to assume they can adopt the mindset of researchers: find sources, decide on their refined topic, and develop a research paper that incorporates analytical writing within a prescribed format. Many students inform me that my *zemi* is the only course they take in English in their last two years of college study.

Pigeonholed interests of students foster a decrease in sharing of ideas, which fails to provide a range of ideas to the students. Weaker academic preparation and reduced scholastic competition fueled by the expansion of recommendation-based entrance exams into college mean that fewer students are prepared for the rigors of writing and independent research. A great deal of knowledge is assumed for the *sotsuron shidou* to work properly, but the increased job hunting requirements and lesser ability of students to devote to their studies has led to the challenges encountered by *zemi* supervisors.

Research writing and thesis topic formation can only occur with the nurturing of research habits and writing from their entry into the *zemi*. It is unsurprising that few students are readily able to write a *sotsuron* under a native English speaking teacher in English. For these reasons — students' lack of expertise in long form research in English, and the teachers' isolation and lack of recourse in regards to *sotsuron* guidance — Joe and I decided that cross-institutional collaboration was a most promising solution. As we were unable to count on our colleagues for this sort of collaboration concerning *sotsuron* supervision, we turned to cross-institutional collaboration, which appeared to be a feasible way forward and out of our predicament.

#### **b. Definition of CL in this Study**

Initially, we had only a vague notion of CL, simply as 'working towards the same goal' that would be manifested in primarily group-oriented taskwork. We thought collaborative learning was mainly suited for lower-division English language programs of Japanese universities in which students carried out task-based projects for the dual purposes of igniting their skills of language learning and promoting constructive group work. It was our understanding that such group-oriented persuasion did not carry over into the more traditional methods of lecture and teacher-directed efforts of university professors. In the domain of the *zemi*, the *sotsuron* being the end-all to student work, we tended to view its guidance in a top-down relationship between student and teacher, which failed to incorporate the learner-centeredness often cited as the philosophical basis of CL. So for us, the collaborative task was that our students had to reach a reasonably interesting and definable theme or topic for their *sotsuron* and we know this to have been the most difficult part of the process.

An example of how CL can operate in regards to thesis writing can be found with Romme and Nijhuis (2002). They recognize the solitary nature of thesis writing, and have developed an approach which they call "thesis rings", for the purposes of widening the responsibility of thesis supervision, "promoting and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience among students" (p. 6). Romme and Nijhuis define a thesis ring as consisting

“of one or more supervisors and a number of students who share the responsibility for the supervision process of the student-members” (p.2). They advocate that these thesis rings enable students to collaborate and consult with other students, engage in the development of their thesis-writing students, and energize thesis supervision among themselves. Although their manual is for postgraduate theses in business, we believe that their concerns and purposes parallel our own work.

The two-pronged collaborative orientation of our project coincides well with Dillenbourg’s (1999) view of CL as a social contract in which certain expectations between students and the teacher are laid out (p.4). Regarding the nature of *sotsuron* writing, we and our students operate in a sort of social contract of expectations: we expect them to follow instructions and adhere to research boundaries, and they expect the teachers to supervise them to successfully complete their theses.

In addition, Dillenbourg identifies three types of symmetry:

- 1) Action: “the extent to which the same range of actions is allowed to each agent” or person;
- 2) Knowledge: “the extent to which agents possess the same level of knowledge” of skills and development, and
- 3) Status: “the extent to which agents have a similar status with respect to their community. (p.7)

It should be noted that relationships need not be symmetrical for collaborative learning to take place. Asymmetrical relationships can usher in learning. Asymmetries of action, knowledge, and status, in which one person takes the role of a learner and the other a guide or mentor could lead to collaboration later as the persons become familiar with each other. The potential for learning through asymmetry is akin to what Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (1978) aims to accomplish. On the plane of asymmetrical status, peers can serve as experts to each other depending on various fields, experiences, and skills.

With our students, the symmetry of action we envisioned would be their communication with topic formation. As there can be no justifiable measure of ascertaining the degree of asymmetry of their knowledge or status, we expected that students would draw on their life experiences and skills to serve as agents of knowledge and status in collaboration with their *sotsuron* writing, to be at times experts and learners.

Our wrestling with the definition of CL took us from viewing it as a group approach limited to lower-division language courses, into greater appreciation of it through Dillenbourg’s conception of CL as a social contract along with his symmetries of action, knowledge, and status. So we attempted to incorporate CL into our project beyond simply group work into an approach of involving tasks and roles.

### **c. Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and *Sotsuron* Writing**

CMC holds much appeal as a learning medium that is both cost effective and amendable

to handling the multiple avenues of contact between students and teachers. Implementations of CMC for CL have been concentrated for larger introductory classes, such as MOOCs. Hung and Yuen (2010) used the social networking site Ning in their own classes, in utilizing forum participation, blogging, exchanging photos and videos; student satisfaction was heightened, which enriched their learning experience (p. 710). Students remarked that these forms of CMC information sharing not only enhanced their classroom-based community sense (p. 711).

Paradoxically, the networking opportunities that CALL solutions promise have not been put into use with these advanced smaller classes. We see CMC as being a twofold solution: both opening the door for students to new possibilities of their thesis development, and bridging our isolation as educators. Whereas Hung and Yuen utilized social media to enhance communication in classes where students usually interacted face-to-face, CMC for us would be necessary in order to foster a sense of community between our two *zemi* geographically separated by a great distance, which we hoped would lead to collaboration.

The types of symmetry postulated by Dillenbourg (1999) could be realized in our cross-institutional exchanges via CMC between students. Applying such symmetries to our project, the sort of action taken by students could manifest into a distribution of tasks in which each encourages another in *sotsuron* theme formation. Allowing asymmetry of knowledge to occur would involve the peer student development of various skills. An example of asymmetry of knowledge that led to success using CMC is found in Heift and Caws (2000), whose study focused on Canadian students in a French composition class using Macintosh's Aspect network writing environment. They found when peers of differing knowledge worked together, collaboration was fostered. In addition, they reported lessened intervention by the instructor, and decreased off-topic discussion by students than in equally knowledgeable groups. Symmetry of status would be manifested with students on relative equal footing as university seniors, which could lead to expertise developed by tutoring, teaching and coaching. There is CMC technology that enables students to peer-critique each other's work and free up supervisory guidance, as with Peer Portal 2.0 on which Aghaee and Hansson report (2013). CMC could enable such symmetries and asymmetries to be productive for students in dynamic ways through telecollaboration (Zourou 2009, p. 17). Thus, the potential of cross-institutional CL through CMC on which this project relied, we hoped would give rise to other avenues for collaboration and learning. If CMC can improve educational outcomes with enhanced peer interaction, we thought it would be effective in our *zemi*.

### 3. The Project

This project sought to connect students at two universities, separated by over 1100 kilometers, to collaborate in choosing topics at the inception of the *sotsuron* writing process. Our project was an attempt to develop some collaborative strategies between students and ourselves to the first challenge we face in thesis writing, that of choosing a topic. The overarching research question of the project was: can we utilize distant peer-to-peer CMC to

energize and enrich the process of topic selection for graduation theses? This question was intended for two sets of agents: the students, and us the supervisors.

We thought that two *zemi* together would motivate students to interact with each other, to spur them to find their topics. Moreover, we hoped they would carry on their own discussion through CMC independently of us. Our concerns behind the research question were with student reaction with the interface of the technological implementation and the feedback process and the effects on collaboration. We hoped that by raising students' attraction with a visual medium, we would affect the process of collaboration, which had been unsatisfactory in a local face-to-face setting, even between peers. The technological implementation would provide some insights into how we could encourage students to decide and develop their *sotsuron* themes.

We thought it fitting to start the *sotsuron* guidance as supervisor-led, with Joe hosting the initial one in his classroom. As our *zemi* were meeting on different days, so we set up an alternative time during my office hour. Joe was able to assemble six of his *zemi* students for that time. The initial online Skype session lasted about an hour. Joe's students introduced themselves to my students in my office, and elaborated on what they were planning on researching, to which my students reciprocated.

There were a range of challenges to maintaining successful CL that we faced with this project. They can be conceptually divided into two types: a) technological and b) real-world concerns that impinged on CL, namely, job-hunting.

The technological challenge first manifested itself in our Skype connection. It was not robust, so although Joe and I could bear with it, the poor video and audio left students frustrated. While our students had Skype accounts, we wondered about the feasibility holding a chat with multiple participants and the allocation of time with each student. We had imagined that we could use Skype to give students an opportunity to work with each other. But with the problems in connectivity, six weeks into our project, one of my students suggested that they form a chat group on the cellular phone application Line. We preferred Skype because it was a platform that we were accustomed to and one that is used in academic discussion. On the other hand, our students preferred a vehicle that was more in touch with their lifestyle needs, for which Line is primarily designed for smartphones. Skype is more centered on a desktop, and accessibility through mobiles requires a fee. Moreover, Line is more attuned to their aesthetic sense, and helps them feel more at ease discussing their topics.

As for the second type of challenge, that of real-world concerns, we assumed that the initial meeting would have the students recognize the process of *sotsuron* topic selection as one by collaboration, through which they would be making contact with their counterparts weekly. However we did not reckon the priority accorded by students to job hunting, nor the extent it would prey on them. I was confronted with this clash of priorities with one of my *zemi* students, which occurred just a few days after our initial session in April. The student was already a frequent Skype user, and the one who suggested Line as an alternative CMC platform for our *zemi*. She had scheduled a meeting session with Joe, but she emailed me a

day later to inform me that she couldn't meet with him. She apologized for having allowed a job appointment to be scheduled in the interim. Such anxieties as this email exchange between us shows how job concerns had already pervaded the students' mind about their future, which had a damaging effect on the students' *sotsuron* preparation, let alone our project.

Five months after our project started, a student of Joe's, who had responded to both of my students' messages shown above, emailed me:

On Line, everyone including me seems to be lazy to me. We students don't contact on a regular basic. In other words, we rarely talk on Line. Even though I try to chat after I was told to do so, I always end up giving up. I'm really worried that students at your university rely on our opinions.

This email indicated the online student collaboration that we hoped would be self-perpetuated between them had come to a virtual standstill. Joe and I had been too occupied with our institutional and academic concerns to adequately monitor their interaction, hoping the spark of that initial Skype session would remain kindled. This student did not mention the major reason for the flagging interaction, but the laziness he attributed to everyone was greatly due to their job hunting. Joe later explained to me (personal communication) that this student had not received a job offer at the time of his email, which consequently may have slowed his own thesis progress.

Although the students' focus on jobs before graduation may seem to be a matter of poor time management and misplaced priorities, and hard as it is to fathom why students would not carry out CMC sessions on their own, we must take in account of the pervasive hold that job hunting has over students. Western notions of the university are based on a mistaken view of it as an institution of study (Anderson, in Kelly (1993)), while that for Japanese students, the university is more of form, as a rite of passage into adult society. This view is not just limited to the student, but is entrenched in familial expectations, for which securing a job offer comes first, Securing a job offer is a real-world priority that takes precedence over academic concerns.

#### **4. Analysis of the Project through Dillenbourg's Symmetries**

As I pondered over the disappointing results of our project, I found Dillenbourg's (1999) notions of symmetry to be an insightful explanation of into the dynamics of what makes a learning situation collaborative. Dillenbourg's three symmetries bring to new light to bear on the student interactions and the interaction between the teachers in our project.

Regarding the student collaboration, I realized that Joe and I took for granted this to occur. We expected students would engage in symmetrical actions by communicating with each other to form topics and encourage each other with their thesis writing. As for symmetry of knowledge, we hoped students could draw on their life experiences and skills to serve



as agents of knowledge, fueling each other's thesis with insights. In regards to status, not only would they be students in their final year of university, but given their various life experiences, they would be alternating as experts and learners.

Although asymmetries can lead to supportive action between persons, and knowledge fueling collaborative learning, a lack of understanding of what constitutes action, knowledge and status (i.e. roles), will cause collaboration to flounder. In our project, the lack of comprehension can be attributed in part to the instructors' unclear coordination of the student interactions. Joe and I led the students through the first meeting, but our expectation that the students would conduct their own sessions did not come as we had hoped. One Line chat that Joe partially transcribed (but cannot be reproduced here for legal reasons, as Line does not permit transcription) occurred between Joe's student and my three students who introduced their own topics in it, but a follow-up session did not ensue. The chat revealed a detrimental asymmetry of action in which the range of actions was limited to introducing their own thesis topics than reciprocating ideas. While the Line chat showed that the students shared symmetry of status — they each held part-time jobs — knowledge was demonstrated only by Joe's student, who advised my student to read a psychology textbook. In this regard, the asymmetries among the students could have been too great, leading to the lack of cross-institutional collaborative learning, despite the attractiveness of the CMC.

Reflection on Dillenbourg's symmetries also caused me to consider the dynamics between Joe and me on this project on the two fronts of CL and CMC. First, regarding symmetry of action in CL, till this project with Joe, I had been content to work quite independently of others. Collaboration required a personal act of sacrifice. I had to drop the façade of self-sufficiency to work with another, but it was a decision which was unavoidable to me because I was frustrated supervising theses alone. Concerning status, there was a great degree of asymmetry. Joe had been supervising theses for many more years than me. On the plane of knowledge, Joe had more experience in setting up student collaborative exchanges and is versed in CMC technology. From the start of this project, I could not help but feel a type of CL was taking place between Joe and me, in which I was trying to understand the intertwined concepts of CL and CMC while learning it on the job. Though a teacher, I viewed myself as a learner of CL, in asymmetrical relation with Joe in action, knowledge and status.

Likewise, involvement with CMC brought out asymmetries of action, knowledge, and status between me and Joe. Prior to this project, I had never used Skype or Google chat. So when he suggested these to be used, I welcomed them, because I could learn how to use them and rely on his knowledge. I was glad to accord him the status of being a mentor so that I could also become skilled in these applications. Consequently, the asymmetry of action coincided with knowledge: Joe took the lead to set up the project and inform the students to prep them for this project on topic formation. I observed these workings as a novice in these matters.

CL as viewed through symmetries of action, knowledge and status among students with the progress of their theses, was not realized satisfactorily in the project aim. But, on the supervisory plane, I could see how my understanding of CL and CMC were greatly developed

in these three symmetries. Through the course of the project, I became acquainted with much of the CL literature and accustomed with CMC technology. The insights and familiarity gained from working with Joe helped me greatly as a teacher. I gained enough confidence to initiate CMC approaches with my own students utilizing Google Drive and Skype to help them complete their theses. This later interaction with my students revealed that they regarded Skype as more suitable for personal/private communication than for academic multi-sharing. As I became comfortable with CMC, I could better communicate with my students on supervising their theses. Familiarity with CMC technology also enabled me to create documents on Google Drive on a textbook project. Lastly, and most personally rewarding, I established a Skype connection with my aging father from late July of that year.

Dillenbourg's conception of CL as a dynamic arena involving symmetries of action, knowledge, and status allowed me to regard our project using CL not only as a strictly student enterprise, but one in which I was also a learner. As the objective of CL is to enable learners to achieve autonomy, I have somewhat fulfilled that objective in Dillenbourg's symmetries; I act independently, share knowledge, am on relatively equal status, and go beyond to be a catalyst to facilitate other forms of collaboration.

## 5. Reflections

It may appear that we could not answer our research question, which was how well can we utilize distant peer to peer CMC to energize and enrich the process of topic selection for graduation theses? We realized that there were several technological challenges, combined with the detrimental impact of job hunting on their collaborative actions.

Looking back, the initial Skype meeting in April with my three students and Joe's six students seemed the appropriate impetus for the students to spark their collaboration. The session appeared to be the standard self-introduction protocol that Japanese students perform an act that is primarily performative, assuming the teacher already knows the material and the student is merely demonstrating his or her knowledge. The amount of information that was exchanged in the initial 'meeting' between the various students was minimal, as it served more being an introduction than discussion. Students could have probably corresponded with each other through email. But I remember seeing the apparent positive student reaction with their smiles. The act of putting forth their *sotsuron* ideas impressed both me and Joe, that they were motivated in putting together their thoughts, indicative of a stage that usually does not occur until much later in the thesis research process. By having the students interact with cross-institutional peers, it de-centers the teacher's primacy in the process and encourage the students to develop autonomy, as advocated by Bruffee (1984) and Barkley et al. (2005). Our aim was to challenge students in presenting their own conceptions and notions of *sotsuron* writing.

The two groups of students online convinced us that cross-institutional CL could be realized, but it was unable to produce a lasting and self-perpetuating relationship between students. The meeting of cross-institutional peers requires bridging an information gap

between students who are complete strangers that can only be overcome between themselves in time, with additional information and qualifications. While job hunting undermined our goals and progress, the de-centering that took place gave students a different outlook to the process of creating a *sotsuron*. The act of taking their presentation outside the confines of the university class and bringing them to peers at another institution had the students understand more the expectations of writing a *sotsuron* paper.

Although the project itself did not end with the desired results we had hoped for, the reverberations of our project on our students seemed to have inspired them to work on their *sotsuron* in ways that were unfathomed in pace or their approaches. Concerning Joe's students, three of the six students were already working on longer drafts of their paper by mid-September, which usually did not take place until mid-November. Furthermore, three of the students expressed an interest in submitting their papers to the university's library seminar contest held at the end of October, and which two finished early, something that was unprecedented.

As for my students, this project may have made them more open to adopt changes to their *sotsuron* writing. My three students' *sotsuron* development was slower than the previous year due to their job hunting which plagued them till the end of the summer vacation. In order to help them along writing their theses, I suggested to them to post their drafts on Google Drive so that we could edit together real-time. At this time I regarded these interactions as taking place outside of the project since they did not involve other students or Joe. But I recall that fruitful rapport was established and students made significant progress so that they were able to submit their *sotsuron* a few days before the deadline.

Moreover, there is a social dimension as how CL can be overwhelmingly valuable, not only to *sotsuron* writing, but also beyond it. Bruffee (1984) envisages ramifications of this learning for the world beyond: "Collaborative learning provides the kind of social context, the kind of community, in which normal discourse occurs: a community of knowledgeable peers. This is one of its main goals: to provide a context in which students can practice and master the normal discourse exercised in established knowledge communities in the academic world and in business, government, and the professions" (p. 644). Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) state that CL "prepares students for careers by providing them with opportunities to learn the teamwork skills valued by employers it helps students appreciate multiple perspectives and develop skills to collaboratively address the common problems facing a diverse society. And it engages all students by valuing the perspective each student can contribute from his or her personal academic and life experience" (p. 10). For example, my student whose thesis was on assertive communication reported to me a few months after she started working in conjunction with a mobile phone company that the skills and knowledge in my *zemi* she learned in the past year helped her greatly. *Sotsuron* writing in our particular context provides the stepping stone to these "established knowledge communities" beyond the university, by requiring students to submit a properly formatted research paper of appropriate length and explication.

CL as viewed through symmetries of action, knowledge and status among students with

the progress of their theses was not realized satisfactorily in the project aim. But on the supervisory plane, I could see how my understanding of CL and CMC were greatly developed in these three symmetries. Through the course of the project, as I became acquainted with much of the CL literature and getting accustomed with CMC technology, I gained enough confidence to initiate CMC approaches with my own students utilizing Google Drive and Skype to help them complete their theses. In doing so I could reduce the asymmetry of status (at least in my mind) with Joe by gaining experience and skills. Although the two of us have not entered a social contract of expectations, as the objective of CL is to enable learners to achieve autonomy in learning, I could say that I have somewhat fulfilled that objective.

## 6. Conclusion

This project did not succeed in cross-institutionally bridging students with their *sotsuron* writing practices, yet produced lessons of grasping CL and CMC to this educator. Despite the detriment of job-hunting, our progress as thesis supervisors and our students' accomplishments have suggested to us that our idea of cross-institutional collaboration through CMC remains a most promising field. Relying on the social orientation set forth by Bruffee (1984) and Barkley et al. (2005), we hope our students have become acquainted with a collaborative process that is transferable to contexts in the world outside of the university, becoming aware of the importance attached to time restrictions, institutional expectations, and format requirements.

This project has emphasized how important it is to acknowledge that our students are social beings, and for them to achieve their best results, we need to regard them in their totality, not simply as students seeking guidance for their theses. This leads us to conclude that there is something happening here when we take students out of their institutional shells and place them in contact with distant peers in the corners of Japan. Simultaneously, our own development as *zemi* supervisors will be further enhanced as we continue to collaborate with others in the same enterprise, and enabling them to engage in asymmetries/symmetries that will equip them to pass on the knowledge and action needed. Our overall and continuing challenge will be to create the scaffolding that allows both students and educators to communicate.

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