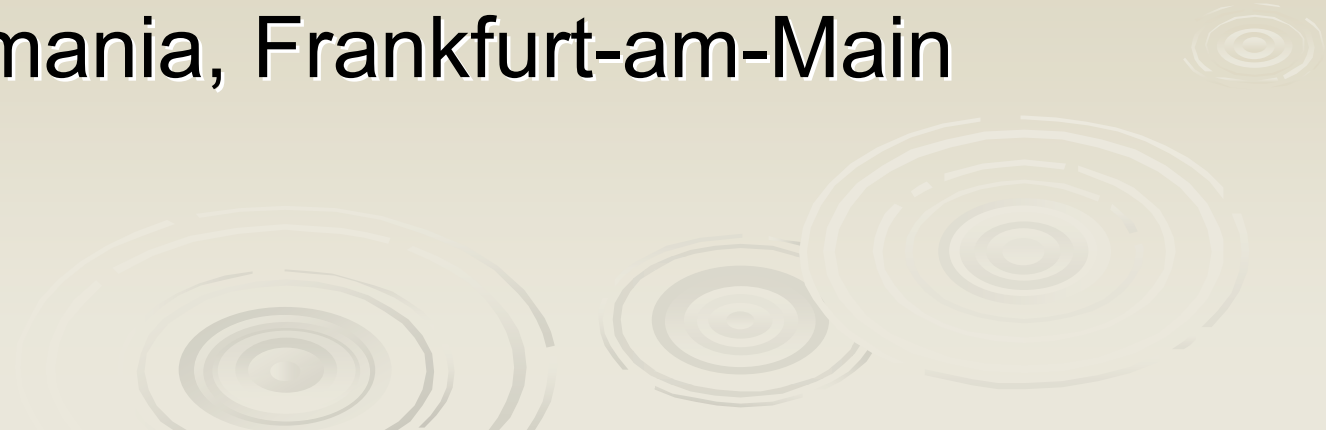


Wikipedia as a learning community

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Wikipedia as a learning community

- Wikipedia is both a product and a process
- I am more interested in the *process*

- My presentation is a mixture of:
 - Research - observation, interviews
 - Theory - background to the area

Learning in Wikipedia

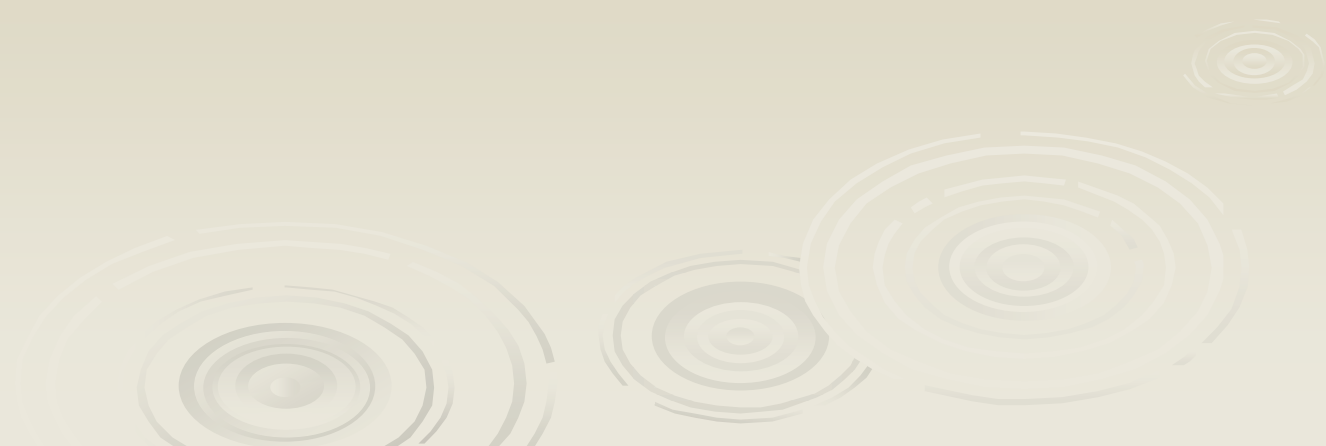
- “Reams of trivia”
- Improve literacy in native and non-native languages
- Being critical of the media
- How to work with other people, from different cultures and backgrounds

Theory

- Learning is:
- Constant
- Active
- Social
- About making sense of our experiences, ie *Reflection*

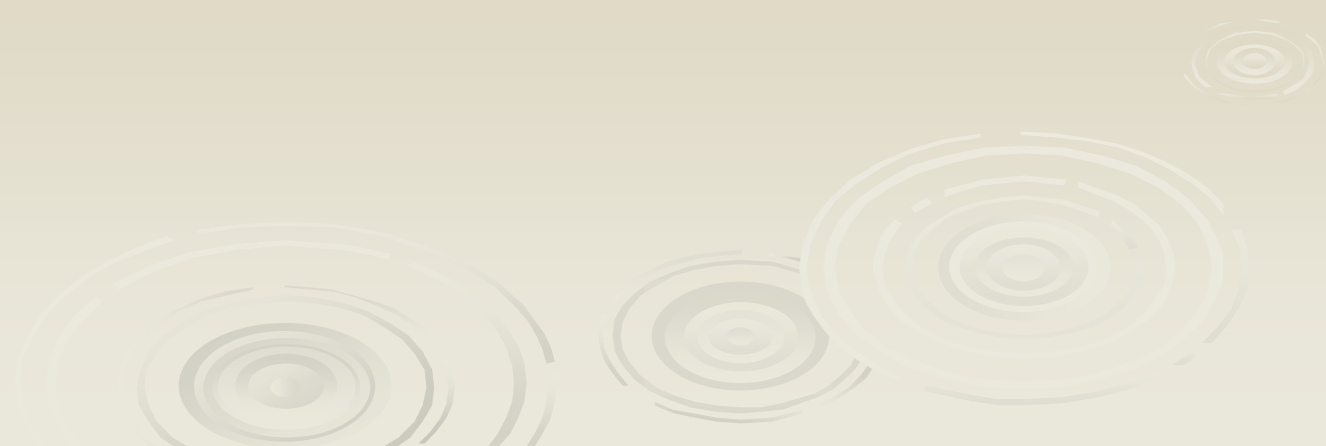
Social theories of learning

- Constructivism
- Shared cognition
- Learning community
- Community of Practice

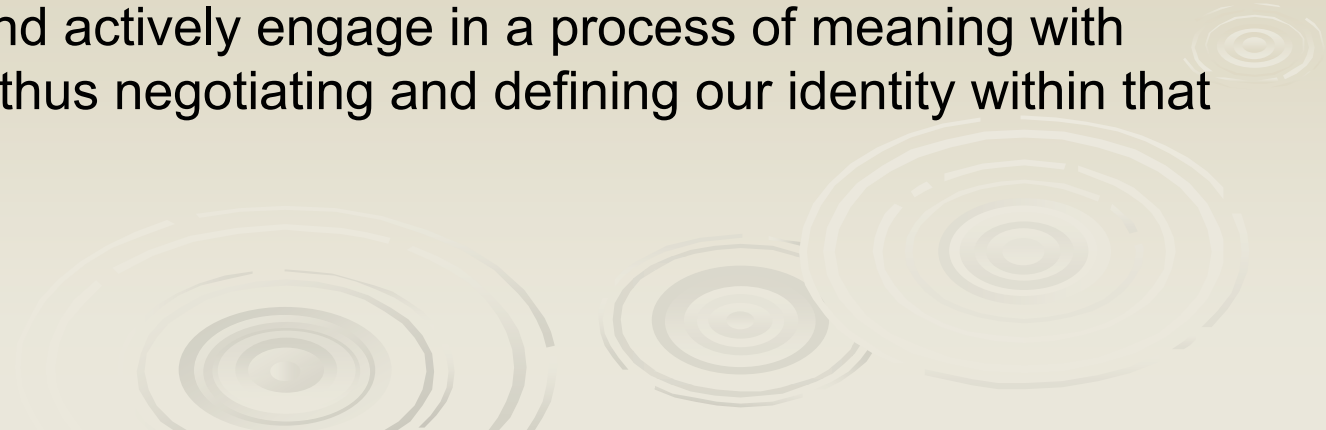


Communities of practice

- Workplace, book club, etc.
- Self directed
- Self-organising
- Cohort groups



Meaning - learning as experience

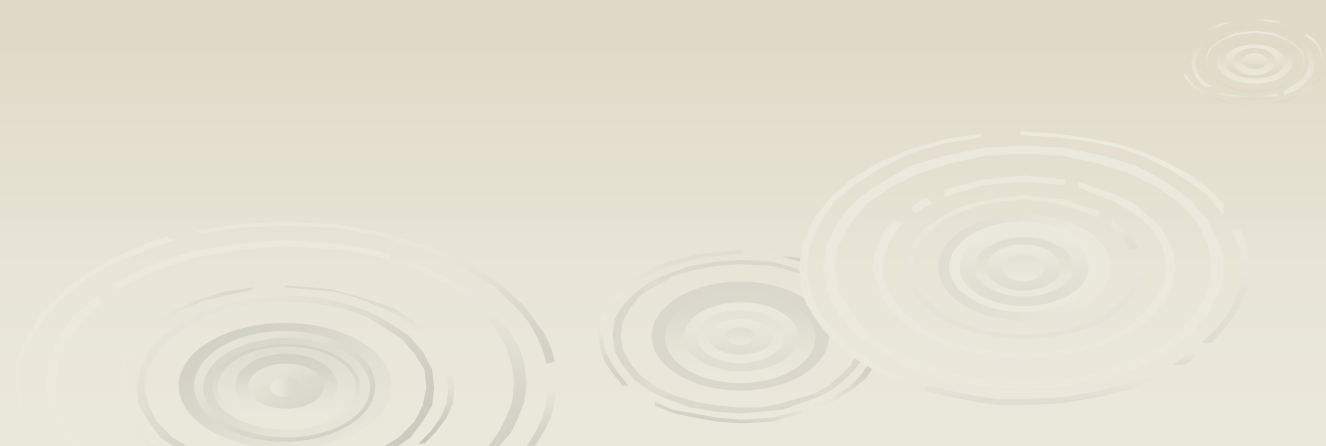
- Practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life (Wenger 1998, p 52)
 - Negotiation and production of meaning
 - This is linked to an experience of participating in a community of linked members – eg. Anthere's response to Joseph Reagle's discussion on "how do we know each other?"
 - We constantly and actively engage in a process of meaning with other members, thus negotiating and defining our identity within that community
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Inventory of social learning


- Meaning
- Practice
- Community
- Identity

(Wenger, 1998)

- Power
- Conflict



Conflict

- Constructive - Destructive
 - Constructive:
 - Forces us to think from the other's POV
 - Potential for sharing perspectives
 - Challenging ourselves
 - Key is critical thinking, sensitivity
- 

Ex Wikipedian

- “I find in many conflicts it ceases being about the content itself and starts being about an objection to the other party involved...Which makes it impossible to accept a compromise introduced from the "other side". Once this is bypassed, though, people can grudgingly agree and get on with improving the project.

Ex Wikipedian (cont.)

- “What I've learned from these experiences is rather valuable. I'm better now at being the "nice guy" when it benefits the situation rather than simply being my normal abrasive self. I've also learned to be extremely careful with how one words things; misinterpretation is dangerous, it happens a lot, and it causes a lot of unneeded conflict and stress. Needless to say this experience carries over into several mediums.”

Ex Wikipedian (cont.)

- “I refuse to get involved again. I just can't do it. It doesn't matter if I stop editing all my old articles and move onto completely new ones because it became very apparent to me that my very presence on the project was vexing to some users. And really, I was never a valuable contributor. If anything, that alone was made astonishingly clear to me.”

Editor education

- [...] editor education is more important here than special methods to resolve contentious articles. There are some subjects that will always tend to attract controversy, you put your finger on it when you say there will always be another newbie coming in and playing the POV game. It's all down to education. [...] Trust your fellow editors.
Tony Sidaway

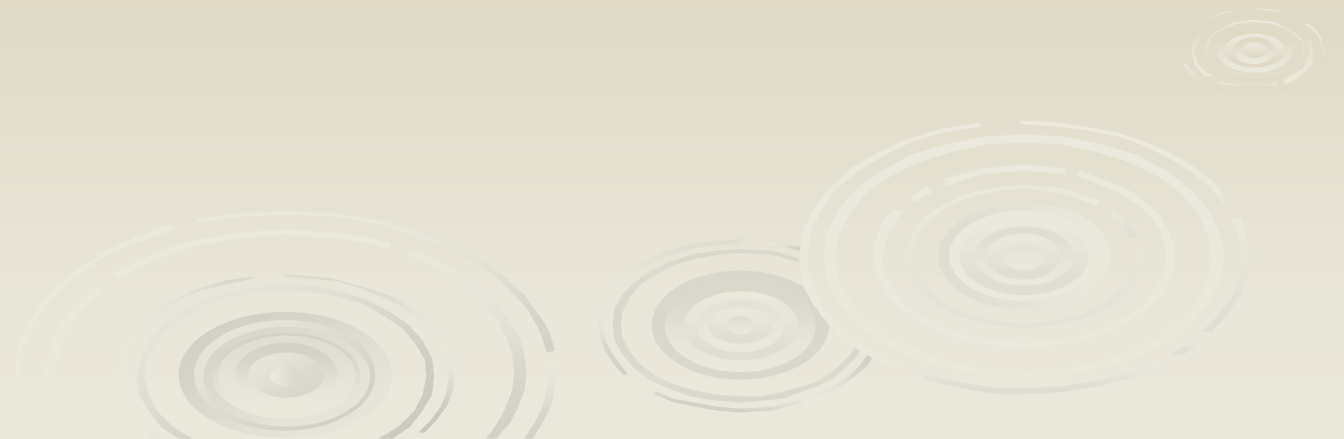
From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Requests_for_arbitration/RFC

Power

- “It seems to me that the society is ruled by a mighty Indian chief accompanied by a second in command, together watching over the activities by everybody on Wikipedia 7X24 hours. The chief appears more and more like the commander of a totalitarian régime using the well-known tools to maintain power: suppression of open criticism of the regime, terroristic methods in terms of persecutions, e.g. if a contributor leaves no: to continue on en: the chief is on the refugees heels.”

However.. alternate view:

“I think on the Norwegian version, people are friendlier towards each other, as there is a smaller community, and everybody knows everybody.”



Power (cont)

- [...] The problems are in some way caused by a lack of written guidelines in the no: language and lack of written conclusions on prior discussions. This situation suits the chief perfectly, HE knows how to remember all outcomes from decisions and knows how to interpret them.”

Pride and humility

- “One interesting possible barrier of entry to active participation in a wiki is what I call the “wiki editing dichotomy”. You have to be proud enough to believe what you are contributing is generally worthwhile to others (or at least worth your effort), but you also have to be humble enough to understand that others can improve it. I don't know of many other collaborative media that requires both pride and humility.” Chris Allen

From: http://www.lifewithalacrity.com/2005/04/future_topics.html

Interesting future

- Shared learning - shared expertise
 - Motivated, self-directed
 - Open debate
 - Framed by neutral discourse..
-
- ..creates an opportunity to call ourselves a new type of expert community

Continued learning

- Critical reflection
- Making sense of our experiences - for ourselves and for others
- In a sense, knowledge management
- Learning organisation

Ideas:

'Lessons learnt' pages (on Meta)

...?