

# Discourse Analysis



- A. Think about discourse in relation to the following definitions...

DISCOURSE IS...

“The use of language” (Chilton, 2004, p. 16), or

“Anything written or said or communicated using signs” (Fillingham, 1993, p. 100), or

“The flow of knowledge through time” (Jäger, 2004, p. 129).

- B. Then, realize that discourses are expressed in many ways including:

- sound
- writing
- gestures
- multimodal forms that convey meaning and information

- C. And that discourse may be considered in relation to:

- syntax (the arrangement of words or phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language)
- lexicon (the vocabulary of a person, language, branch of knowledge)
- speech acts (the action of speaking with a clearly intended meaning behind the speech)
- rhetoric (persuasion of speech and writing)
- Style

- D. Also, be aware that there are different genres of discourse such as:

- social, political or economic
- educational
- media
- science
- ecological
- generational

- E. Discourse analysis is the study of discourses that leads to understanding aspects that include:
- relations between discourse and the emergence of syntactic structure
  - relations between text (discourse) and context
  - relations between discourse and power
  - relations between discourse and interaction
  - relations between discourse and cognition and memory
- F. Remember:
- Look for the hidden power relations within discourses.
  - Look to see who is exercising power.
  - Ask yourself, whose discourses are being presented, privileged, or hidden or maybe even shut down?
  - Who are the authorities of knowledge being used in the discourse?
  - Who is the ideal subject or audience for the discourse?
  - What is left unsaid?
  - What type of voice is used? Active? Passive?
  - How is information presented?
  - How are people characterized?
  - What is the intent of the message?
  - Are there supportive messages, images, signs, or symbols?
  - What messages are being repeated?
  - In what ways is the argument being presented?
  - Where do people encounter the message?
  - What standards are applied to the truthfulness or authenticity of the information?

