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### Employing nexus analysis in investigating information literacy

[Anna-Maija Multas](#) and [Noora Hirvonen](#).

**Introduction.** This study discusses the potential of nexus analysis in information literacy research. Nexus analysis is a theoretical-methodological approach that examines the linkages between discourse and action.

**Method.** Nexus analysis is discussed in relation to other socially oriented approaches to information literacy research and illustrated with an empirical example.

**Analysis.** The key ideas and concepts of nexus analysis are explained, compared to related approaches, namely, practice and sociocultural theories and discourse analysis. An empirical example on the information literacy practices of a young video blogger is used to illustrate the application of this approach.

**Results.** Whereas practice-theoretical and sociocultural information literacy studies tend to examine the practices of fixed social groups, nexus analysis focuses first on social action. In contrast to most discourse analytical studies, it investigates how discourses are manifested in action. The empirical example illustrated how the key tasks of nexus analysis and data triangulation provided diverse perspectives on exploring information literacy.

**Conclusion.** The value of nexus analysis lies in its unique way of combining elements from various approaches and the practical guidelines it offers for multimodal analysis. It provides new insight for socially oriented information literacy research by focusing on the ways individuals' histories and identities, discourses circulating in a scene and mutually produced interaction order intersect in a specific moment in time to enable social action.

## Introduction

Nexus analysis is a theoretical-methodological framework that draws from different research traditions to

build understanding of social action in interpersonal, community and societal levels by focusing on the ways actors' histories and identities, discourses circulating in a scene and mutually produced interaction order intersect in a specific moment in time in a nexus of practice (Scollon and Scollon, 2004; Lane, 2014). This study discusses the potential of nexus analysis in information literacy research in relation to other socially oriented approaches and provides an empirical example on its utilization. Nexus analysis may be of particular interest to researchers examining information literacy from sociocultural, practice theoretical or discourse analytical approaches, where information literacy is regarded not only as individual level skills to seek, evaluate and use information, but to emergence through social and material practices (see Lloyd, 2017).

## Background: socially oriented information literacy research

Tuominen, Savolainen and Talja noted in their article published in 2005 that at that time research on information literacy as a practice was still in its infancy (Tuominen et al. 2005). According to them, the practice approach had the potential to shift the focus of information literacy research away from the 'behavior, action, motives, and skills of monologic individuals' towards an understanding of information literacy as embedded in the activities of communities and inseparable from domain specific sociotechnical practices (Tuominen et al. 2005, p. 339). In particular, Tuominen et al. (2005) called for empirical information literacy research that would focus on ways different communities use conceptual, cultural and technical tools to access documents and to evaluate and create knowledge.

Since then, a growing body of research has emerged where information literacy is regarded as or to be embedded in social practices, rather than as individual level skills (see e.g., Lupton and Bruce, 2010; Hicks, 2018; Limberg, Sundin and Talja, 2012; Addison and Meyers, 2013). Nexus analysis is closely connected in particular to sociocultural and practice theoretical approaches, which have strongly influenced information literacy research in recent years, and to critical discourse analysis, which is a more rarely applied approach within this research area.

Practice theories can be described as approaches dedicated to exploring social reality with a conceptual basis rooted theoretically and philosophically in the notion of practice and empirically in the activities of people (Nicolini, 2013). Typically, practice theories highlight either the historical, reproductive nature of practices (represented by Bourdieu, Wittgenstein and Giddens, for example) or the situated practices that are emergent, ongoing and dynamic (represented by Lave, Suchman and Latour, for example) (Talja and Nyce 2015). Talja and Nyce (2015, p. 65) point out that the central interest in practice theoretical studies in library and information science has been in ways people come to possess something that can be called expertise, not as the acquisition of disembodied representations of knowledge but rather as

*embedded, embodied, intuitive, opportunity based, and self-sustained in the sense they are based on acting in situations whose specific characteristics are and become part of the practice as it unfolds* (Talja and Nyce, 2015, p. 64).

Lloyd (2017), drawing from both sociocultural and practice theoretical approaches, defines information literacy as a way of knowing; a practice enacted in a social setting, composed of activities and skills that connect to structured and embodied ways of knowing relevant to a certain context. Empirical information literacy research taking a practice theoretical approach has focused on ways information literacy is enacted in different communities, including patients (Lloyd, Bonner and Dawson-Rose, 2014), serious leisure communities (Lloyd and Olsson, 2018), students (Schreiber, 2014) and academics (Pilerot, 2016).

Sociocultural and practice theoretical approaches to information literacy research tend to be tightly connected, and often researchers draw from both approaches (see e.g., Olsson and Lloyd, 2017). Whereas practice theories originate from social and cultural theory, philosophy and theories of science and technology (see Schatzki, 2001), the sociocultural approach is a theory of learning and psychological development. Based on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and developed further by Wertsch (1991), for example, sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning and development occur in social interaction with key concepts such as cultural tools, zone of proximal development and scaffolding. Sociocultural studies

tend to take action mediated by cultural tools as the unit of analysis ([Wertsch 1998](#), [Limberget al., 2012](#)). Similarly to practice theoretical research, these studies are typically ethnographically oriented, allowing the exploration of people's activities in their 'natural' settings ([Limberget al., 2012](#)). In information literacy research, this means that literacy is typically investigated by exploring information practices and the tools used within them ([Limberget al. 2012](#)). Hicks ([2018](#)) states that sociocultural perspectives to information literacy research have helped to question the idealised models of information literacy as they have focused on *actual* activities of people. Wang, Bruce and Hughes ([2011](#)) emphasise the need to understand *communities of practice* to teach information literacy. The concept of community of practice ([Lave and Wenger, 1991](#)) has influenced both practice theoretical and sociocultural theories and is widely known also in library and information science ([Cox, 2012](#)).

Discourse analysis refers to a range of approaches that focus on ways language is used. Unlike practice theoretical and sociocultural approaches that typically take social action as the starting point of research, discourse analysis focuses on language *as* social action and practice (see [Scollon, 2001a](#); [Jones and Norris 2005](#)). In information literacy research, discourse analysis is still relatively rarely applied ([Walton and Cleland, 2017](#)), but exceptions exist. [Limberget al. \(2012\)](#) discusses the use of Foucauldian discourse analysis in information literacy research and states that its main aim in this context would be to capture the socially and culturally shaped ways of understanding information competences and information practices and to '*identify the specific lens and background assumptions that underpin a specific way of discussing information literacy*' ([Limberget al. 2012](#), p. 111). According to them, besides studies that explicitly focus on information literacy discourses (e.g. [Julien and Williamson, 2010](#); [Pawley, 2003](#)), related discourse analytic studies can be relevant as they touch on conceptions of the nature of information and information practices (e.g., [McKenzie 2003](#); [Haider and Bawden, 2007](#)). [Oliphant \(2015\)](#) states that discourse analysis can contribute specifically to social justice research in library and information science. Critical discourse analysis in particular places focus on '*what is wrong in society*' and examines the relationship of language and social structure, including power relations and ideologies ([Fairclough, 2010](#)). Discourse analytical studies by [Kapitzke \(2003\)](#), [Seale \(2010\)](#) and, more recently, [Brooks \(2017\)](#), for example, connect to this tradition and to the concept of *critical information literacy* that draws from critical theory and pedagogy and focuses on the ways information literacy can generate social change ([Tewell, 2015](#)).

## Theoretical basis of nexus analysis

Nexus analysis—mediated discourse analysis in earlier writings (see [Scollon and Scollon 2007](#))—can be viewed as a theoretical-methodological approach ([Kuure, Riekkilä and Tumelius, 2018](#)) and understood both as a form of ethnography and as an action-oriented approach to discourse analysis ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#), p. 7). This approach has been employed especially in research on language learning and language policy ([Kuure et al., 2018](#)) and literacies, for example to examine changing literacy practices within classrooms ([Räsänen, 2015](#)) and when playing and using new technologies ([Wohlwend, 2009](#); [2011](#)). Recently, we have applied nexus analysis to explore information literacy practices in a classroom setting ([Hirvonen and Palmgren-Neuvonen, 2019](#)).

Nexus analysis examines the linkages between discourse and action ([Scollon and de Saint-Georges, 2011](#)). This multidisciplinary approach has its roots in research traditions of interactional sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and critical discourse analysis, among others ([Kuure et al., 2018](#); [Lane, 2014](#); [Hult, 2016](#)). It takes *action* as its starting point and the unit of analysis and, in accordance with sociocultural theories, views all action as social and mediated by cultural tools (see [Wertsch, 1991](#)) that can be semiotic resources or physical tools such as technological applications ([Lane, 2014](#)). In nexus analysis, cultural tools are referred to as *mediational means*. Discourses are considered as one of the many available tools with which people take action ([Rish, 2015](#)). With this approach, nexus analysis has sought

*to develop a theoretical remedy for discourse analysis that operates without reference to social actions on the one hand, or social analysis that operates without reference to discourse on the other* ([Scollon 2001a](#), p. 1).

Although discourses in nexus analysis are viewed as key processes in social action ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)), it differs from traditional discourse analysis, which focuses on examining language itself ([Lane, 2014](#); [Jones and Norris, 2005](#)) by placing the analysts within *the nexus of practice* under study ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#), p. 9). Following Schatzki's (2002; see also [Hui, Schatzki and Shove, 2017](#)) idea of the social order consisting of people, artefacts, organisms and things in different relations, nexus of practice is defined as '*the point at which historical trajectories of people, places, discourse, ideas, and objects come together to enable some action*' ([Scollon and Scollon 2004](#), viii). In contrast to the concept of community of practice, nexus of practice does not require participation in a fixed social group ([Scollon, 2001a](#)).

In nexus analysis, three key elements are considered to be involved in any social action: discourses in place, historical body and interaction order (see Figure 1).

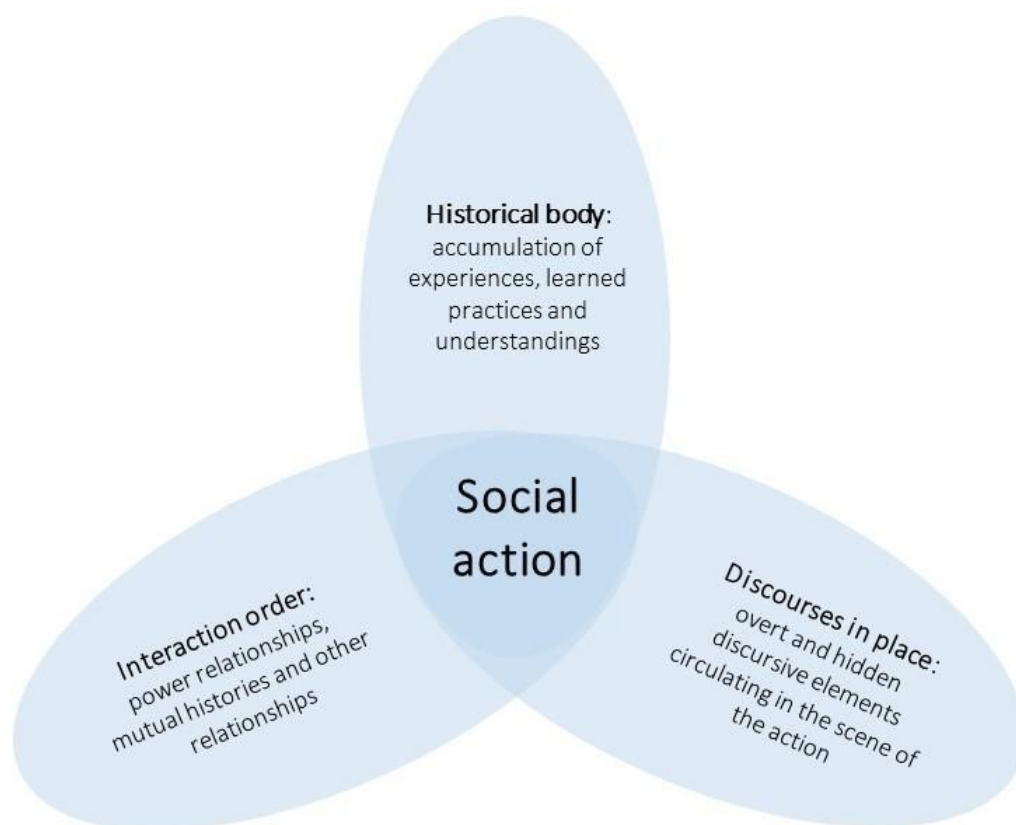


Figure 1: Key elements of social action (adapted from [Scollon and Scollon 2004](#)).

*Discourses in place* refer to the discursive elements circulating throughout the social action and its scene. A wide range of discourses circulate in any given scene, and they are seen to influence interaction by enabling certain interaction and inhibiting others ([Martinviiitaet al., 2015](#)). Focus is placed on those discourses that mediate action, that is, used by the actors as mediational means ([Lane, 2014](#)). Following Gee (2015), discourses refer to ways people engage with each other in communication (language-in-use, 'little d' discourses) but also to '*different multimodal semiotic systems of social practices that people enact as members of different discourse communities*' ('big D' discourses) ([Kuureet al., 2018](#), p. 73; p. 76). The capital D is not used in nexus analysis, but the approach takes into account the interconnectedness of wider societal scales of discourses and those discourses and actions that take place *in situ* ([Kuureet al., 2018](#)).

*Interaction order* (originally from [Goffman 1983](#)) refers to the relationships among those that are involved in action, including their power relations, mutual histories and other relationships. According to Goffman (1983), the tacit agreement about the rules of the interaction order make everyday tasks possible.

For instance, in social situations, people tend to adhere to their expected roles that are shaped historically and culturally by the earlier experiences ([Räisänen, 2015](#)). To get an understanding of the interaction order taking place in a specific situation, a researcher can ask, how being together with certain individuals create opportunities for some kind actions and not others, and focus on exploring the shared norms individuals draw upon to guide their interaction and the expectations individuals have for each other with respect to their relative social positions ([Hult, 2016](#)).

The notion of *historical body* (see [Nishida, 1958](#)) refers to the idea that all participants in social action bring their previous experiences, learned practices and understandings to a scene ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)). Discourses can, through practice and habit, become internalized in a way that they become part of people's historical bodies ([Lane, 2014](#)). Yet, historical body is the accumulation of personal experiences and thus unique for an individual ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)). The concept is closely related to Bourdieu's (1977) habitus, but highlights the corporeal body as the repository of individuals' bodily memories ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)).

The elements of social action are seen to be inseparably connected; the social action that is investigated occurs at a specific moment in time and is connected to the historical bodies of social actors, discourses in place and interaction order, mutually produced by the participants ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)). These aspects, intersecting in the nexus of practice, are viewed as intertwined and reciprocally shaped.

## Doing nexus analysis in practice

Nexus analysis typically begins from a social issue that needs to be addressed, embedding the approach within the critical tradition of social sciences and humanities ([Lane, 2014](#)). A researcher doing nexus analysis is not an objective observer but enters a zone of identification, becomes a participant in the nexus of practice ([Kuureet al. 2018](#)) and even transforms it ([de Saint-Georges and Scollon, 2011](#)). For conducting a comprehensive nexus analysis, Scollon and Scollon (2004) suggest conducting three central tasks: 1. *engaging* with the relevant scenes and actors, 2. *navigating* the cycles of discourse involved in the action and 3. *changing* the nexus of practice. These tasks are explained in more detail in the following chapter with the help of an empirical example.

Several data collection and analysis methods can be used to carry out a nexus analysis (see [Kuureet al., 2018](#)). Some studies use it as a comprehensive methodological framework, others apply only selected elements. Scollon and Scollon (2004) suggest collecting four different types of data: 1. member's generalizations (what do participants say they do), 2. 'neutral' observations (what does a 'neutral' observer see), 3. individual experience (descriptions of participants' own experience) and 4. interactions with members (participants' account of the analysis). Moreover, analysis methods can range from close empirical examination to broader historical approaches ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)).

The key idea in nexus analysis not to focus solely on participants' views, on discourses or on interaction *in situ*, but to reveal how single moments of social action are nexus points where different discourse cycles meet ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#), p. 8). Language is important in mediating action but, at the same time, objects, technologies, practices and institutions are also used to take action ([Martinviita, 2017](#)). Identifying the ways social actors use these resources in social action may help in understanding why this action takes place the way it does ([Martinviita, 2017](#)). Typically nexus analysis is multimodal since a range of mediational means (cultural tools) are taken into account; besides language, objects, gestures and built environments can be explored ([Kuureet al., 2018](#); [Scollon 2001b](#)). Moreover, discourses are examined *in action*, rather than *as action* ([Jones and Norris, 2005](#)).

## Nexus analysis in exploring information literacy: an empirical scenario

Next, we briefly describe the three tasks of nexus analytic research process, engaging, navigating and



changing the nexus of practice, with the help of an empirical example.

## Engaging

The first stage, engaging, involves the identification of relevant scenes and actors. Nexus analysis begins from a social issue to be explored and identifies points in time and space where a selected social issue is manifested in action (Lane, 2014). In our empirical example, the starting point for research was to discover how young people engage with health related information and create it themselves in everyday settings with a focus on information literacy practices. We chose to narrow our focus on health related social media practices and first scanned relevant blogs. After surveying this scene (see Scollon and Scollon, 2004 for scenes survey) and media discourses, the focus shifted to video blogging that appeared as a more pertinent media for content creation among young people.

The first author familiarised herself with video blogging practices by watching video blogs on YouTube, participating events organized by a video blogging community and reading studies related to content production in social media. This also allowed her to explore the typical interaction order in video blogging; if people are usually alone or in small 'withs', if the actions occur in task groups or teams and if they occur as performances before audiences, for example (Scollon and Scollon, 2004). The first author decided that the best way to explore video blogging actions would be to recruit individual video bloggers. She contacted video bloggers who had an interest in health issues by email and via social media and collected different types of data to better understand the actions of participants and to establish a zone of identification. In our example, we focus on one participant, Jane, a 16-year-old high school girl from Finland, and her actions when creating a new video on her YouTube channel.

## Navigating

The navigation stage involved a more detailed examination of selected practices, discourses and social actions (Lane, 2014). Following Scollon and Scollon's (2004) suggestion to use different types of data, the video blogs Jane had published on YouTube were observed ('neutral' observations), she was interviewed (member's generalizations, individual experience and interaction with the member) and asked to create a new video about a health topic to her YouTube channel and record the process on a video diary ('neutral' observation) (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: The central tasks of nexus analysis and timeline for data collection.

In our empirical example we take the new YouTube video Jane created as a point of departure for the analysis. The other data—the video diary and pre- and post-interviews—were used to give insight into Jane's actions.

Jane is sitting in a yellow hoodie in front of a white wall with a plant behind her. She is faced towards the video camera while talking to the anticipated viewers, keeping the same position for the whole eight minute video. Her gestures are lively; she uses her hands while talking

and her facial expressions are vivid. At the beginning of the video, Jane talks about her appearance and comments her lack of makeup noting that she ‘looks weird’ but ‘let’s keep it as real as possible. And honest’. After this, she begins a short introduction to the video by saying ‘So today I am here to talk to you about stress’. She goes on by listing things she is stressed about including school work, her sleep cycle, YouTube videos, being different and not having friends. After this, she shares stress relief tips she has found useful. To highlight the message, texts such as ‘talk things aloud’, ‘write stories’ and ‘plan and schedule’ appear in the screen. The final tip concerns deadlines in school work. Jane explains her own recent experience on the issue and encourages viewers to take action in asking for extension for deadlines. The video ends with a notion to ‘have self-mercy and rest’ and to a greeting to the expected viewers: ‘I love you all so much!’

Keeping in mind our focus in information literacy practices, including seeking and use of information sources, mediational means employed and related discourses, we started with questions concerning the interaction order, discourses in place and historical body emergent in the scene of action (see Table 1).

Table 1: Guiding questions and observations on social action

<b>Element of social action</b>	<b>Guiding questions</b>	<b>General observations on different data</b>	<b>Observations on information literacy practices</b>
Discourses in place	What is talked about and how? What discourses circulate in the particular scene? Is the focus on single or multiple discourses?	<p>YouTube video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authenticity based on personal experiences --- “keeping it real”, me talking to “you” (the anticipated audience)</li> <li>- Conventions of a ‘subject video’ --- what can be said and what not</li> </ul> <p>Video diary and interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Credibility of sources; use of several sources --- school talk about Wikipedia</li> </ul>	<p>YouTube video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience-based authority</li> </ul> <p>Video diary and interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discourses on acceptability and use of information sources --- first-hand experience vs. second-hand (credible) sources</li> </ul>
Interaction order	Are people alone, in pairs or in groups; in a platform or in meetings? Who is talking with who? What kind of roles and role expectations are there?	<p>YouTube video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jane talking alone</li> <li>- Adviser role --- responding to the expectations of the anticipated audience</li> </ul> <p>Video diary and interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking to and with the researcher</li> <li>- Informant role --- responding to the researcher’s expectations</li> </ul>	<p>The expected audience and video blogging practices orient Jane’s actions;</p> <p>YouTube video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience-based spoken and written tips</li> <li>- No mention of information sources</li> </ul> <p>Video diary and interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of several sources to plan the video</li> </ul>
Historical body	What prior knowledge and experiences are brought to the scene? How habitual is this action for the	<p>YouTube video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting and the structure of the video follows a subject video genre ---</li> </ul>	<p>Youtube video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First-hand experience on stress</li> </ul>

<p>participants? To what other practices is this linked?</p>	<p>experienced video blogger --- - Familiarity with the anticipated audience --- followers of Jane's Youtube channel</p>	<p>Video diary: - Prior experience on using different sources when creating new video blogs</p>
	<p>Video diary and interview: - Jane's experiences on video blogging (as a consumer and producer), her own experiences on stress and historicity of video blogging practices</p>	<p>Interview: - Jane as a student --- prior knowledge on information seeking and use in school</p>

On face value, the YouTube video focuses on Jane's talk on her personal experiences on stress and advice based on that experience. Jane's presence in the video is comfortable and she talks to the viewers in a familiar manner, presenting herself as authentic as possible. The structure and style of the video seems to be guided by the conventions a 'subject video' genre, in which video bloggers talk and share their opinions about a chosen topic.

The other data—interviews and video diary—show a more complex picture of the planning process of the Youtube video and the information literacy practices involved. Although in the finished video Jane does not refer to information sources, the video diary shows her to employ a range of tools including her mobile phone and laptop to find online information sources and to make a consultative phone call to a family member. In this video, she explains to have searched the word 'stress' from Google and found an article on an online health library webpage with eleven tips on dealing with stress some of which she will *'definitely pick --- as they are all so sensible'*.

Accordingly, in the pre-interview, Jane talked about using different sources when planning a new video, such as asking friends or relatives, and using online sources, also Wikipedia although *'in school they say not to look for any information on Wikipedia'* and *'you should look from other sources too'*. However, in the post-interview, conducted after the video was finished, highlighted the importance of personal experience: *'I wanted the topic to be more current for me and that I would naturally have more to say about it'*. When asked about how she used the information found from the online health library, she disclosed to *'have come up with her own things'* but described the online health library as *'good'* because it *'gave direction'* and included *'self-evident tips'*. She further added that she *'could use them in the video just because they were close to'* her. Jane also talked about loading the video on YouTube and explained that she was nervous about how the anticipated viewers receive the new video, because they might think that she doesn't have enough of personal experience of the subject.

These observations demonstrate parallel discourses on use and credibility assessment of sources: one foregrounding first-hand experience and another foregrounding use of (credible) second-hand sources. Although in this example all data is basically in the same form (video recordings), the example illustrates how each data set (the video blog, the video diary, the pre- and post-interview) provides a slightly different picture of Jane's actions with information sources. The data collection settings represent different interaction orders and position the participants in different ways, providing different views on the social action under examination. In the YouTube video, created for her followers, Jane takes an adviser role, apparently grounding her authority on her own experience on the subject, rather than on second-hand information sources. In interview situations and in the video diary created for the researcher, Jane takes the role of an informant, explaining her actions to the researcher interested in her ways of seeking and using information. In these situations, Jane appeared to refer to school norms on source credibility to meet the anticipated expectations of the researcher.

In addition to discourses and interaction order, Jane's actions are directed by her historical body, lived experience gained through involvement in various communities with different practices and norms. Jane's



experience on video blogging and familiarity with the followers of her YouTube channel became evident in the YouTube video. Also the interviews and video diary informed the researchers about her historical body: In the pre-interview with Jane, she disclosed that she had been making videos on YouTube for almost five years. According to her, her videos are usually ‘topic videos’ connected to everyday activities, such as school work and common issues in the wellbeing of young people, but she also had a history of making videos about slime. Being fluent in another language besides Finnish, she said to often prefer to use sources in that language. The technical tools available for Jane, the practices of video blogging and the competencies she has acquired earlier, among other resources are part of her everyday activities in school and at home, and as such regarded as internalized as mediational means in the nexus of the video blogging practice.

Our interest in Jane’s actions in these different settings was drawn on the way she used information sources and talked—or did not talk—about them in different situations. By following the cycles ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)) or itineraries ([Scollon, 2011](#)) of discourse with the different data sources, we can continue to follow selected cycles more carefully to consider how multiple forms of discourse are involved in action: speech of participants in mediated actions, texts, images and other semiotic systems used as mediational means, discourses that are submerged in historical bodies, practices, in the design of built environment and objects and speech or writing of the analysts conducting nexus analysis.

## Changing

The final stage of nexus analysis is changing the nexus of practice. By establishing a zone of identification, the researcher becomes a part of the nexus of practice and thereby also influences it ([Lane, 2014](#)). Researchers do not attempt to take a neutral position but unavoidably bring about change by participating and may also bring the analysis back to people they have worked with ([Lane, 2014](#)). Nexus analysis has been described as an optimistic approach for reminding that by doing research researchers are already making a difference in the world by acting in it, learning new things and opening up important questions ([Wortham, 2006](#)). Often there is an activist element to nexus analysis as the objective is not only to observe action but also to change the nexus of practice ([Lane, 2014](#)). This being said, Scollon and Scollon ([2004](#)) emphasize that the researcher is not in a *privileged* position to bring about change.

In our example, a potential for changing the nexus of practice emerged already when the researcher contacted the participants. Their discussions and the assignments the participants were given (on the video diary) contributed to how the participants reflected their own actions when creating a video blog with a special attention to information sources, as mentioned by Jane. Besides changes in the historical bodies of the participants, the researchers’ historical bodies have also changed. Moreover, by communicating the findings, they can contribute to theoretical knowledge and this way create change. As the researcher grants her time and skills to make connections with historical bodies, discourses in place and interaction order, she alters the trajectories for herself and for others in the nexus on practice ([Scollon and Scollon, 2004](#)).

## Conclusion

Nexus analysis may be a valuable approach to add to the tradition of socially oriented information literacy research. It combines different types of data and elements from various approaches with an aim to unfold the historicity and situatedness of social action ([Martinviita, 2017](#)). In particular, we view the following elements unique and useful:

1. Nexus analysis **combines elements from various approaches** focused on discourse and social action. As such, many of its basic concepts and ideas may already be familiar to researchers exploring information literacy from the critical discourse analytic, practice theoretical or sociocultural perspectives. The novelty is in this ‘principled eclecticism’ ([Hult 2015](#)) as well as in the way it enables the exploration of the linkages between discourse and action ([Scollon and de Saint-Georges, 2011](#)).

2. Nexus analysis **offers practical guidelines** for positioning of the researcher as well as for data collection and analysis, allowing a wide degree of freedom to employ any relevant data or analytical tools found useful for studying social action (Norris and Jones, 2005). Nexus analysis can be used as a broad meta-methodology (Hult 2015) including three central tasks—engaging, navigating and changing the nexus of practice—and four types of data to be collected. In a narrower scale, the key elements of nexus analysis can be used as analytical tools.
3. Unlike traditional ethnographic studies as well as most practice theoretical and sociocultural information literacy studies, nexus analysis **does not take a fixed social group or a specific community as a starting point but focuses first on social action** (Scollon and Scollon, 2004).
4. Nexus analysis is **particularly suitable for multimodal analysis**. Similarly to sociocultural information literacy studies, nexus analysis highlights the use of language as an important mediational means. However, it also considers other semiotic and material tools as integral to social practices (Lane, 2014; Limberget al., 2012) and—in contrast to most discourse analytical studies—views discourses not only as language use but as ‘a social language’ (Scollon and Scollon, 2003).
5. Besides discourses, nexus analysis considers **individuals’ unique experiences, learned practices and understandings—the historical body—as an important element of social action**, highlighting the corporeal body as the repository of individuals’ bodily memories (Scollon and Scollon, 2004). Furthermore, the relationships among those involved in action—the interaction order—are explored to reveal how shared norms and positions, for example, influence social action in a particular situation.

Nexus analysis is perhaps not the best option for a researcher with little experience on empirical research since it does not offer a careful explanation of how different methods should be used (Wortham, 2006). Moreover, the variety of concepts and combining the ideas originating from different fields may bring about challenges for researchers who are not familiar with social and cultural theories or other related approaches. As a research tradition, nexus analysis is still young and is applied in diverse ways (Kuureet al., 2018). Yet, this diversity can prove fruitful in examining phenomena that are complex and changing in nature (Kuureet al. 2018) such as information literacy.

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