The Development of a Flanders Interaction Analysis Style Instrument for use in Educational Computer Mediated Communication Research

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(Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education)

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October, 1992

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This paper describes the development and tests the reliability of a process analysis instrument used to study the socio-emotional climate reflected in the computer mediated communication patterns of an on-line graduate level seminar. The process analysis instrument was developed from the Flanders Interaction Analysis model, from which other instructional research coding instruments such as The Verbal Interaction Coding System (VICS) and Hough's Observational System for Classroom Instruction, both used in traditional face-to-face classroom research, have evolved.

The reliability of the instrument was determined to be a function of the amount of training and practice provided to the raters. With a training and practice period of under two hours average reliability ratings of .70 were achieved with the final iteration of the test instrument. Reliability tests calculated after varying amounts of coder/rater training suggest that the process analysis instrument developed in this study can be readily modified to suit specific research needs or interests.

An examination of other research methodologies for studying computer mediated communication is provided and future online research implications are explored.