

ijCSCL Symposium
**“Productive tensions in CSCL: Should design be driven by
theory, research or practice?”**

Friedrich W. Hesse and Gerry Stahl

Participants:

For the theory perspective: Claire O’Malley and Nancy Law

For the practice perspective: Angelique Dimitrakopoulou and Ulrich Hoppe

Discussant: Roy Pea

The relationship among theory, research and practice in the design of instructional technology and educational interventions is complex and controversial. It differs by discipline—e.g., psychology, education, computer science, and sociology. In some cases theory is used to derive special expectations to be tested in order to confirm and refine a developed and differentiated theory which can be used to guide design and intervention. In other cases (such as grounded theory, action research or ethnography) theory and analytic categories emerge largely from the data or even as a reflection on practice and the needs of practitioners. For design-based research, theory, research and practice co-evolve together through iterative trials in naturalistic circumstances.

In this symposium, the nature of theories, their relevance for research and practice and their benefits with respect to traditions of the disciplines contributing to CSCL will be discussed as major forces for productive tensions in our field. Researchers from the CSCL-Community and Authors of ijCSCL papers representing different positions on this issue will briefly present their arguments. Discussants will respond to each of these presentations. The audience will be challenged to conclude on productive roles for theory, research and practice in CSCL.” In this context we will have two short contributions from participants for the theory part, two for the practice part and one contribution from a discussant.