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# Is a picture worth a thousand words?
## What can lifelogging tell us about media of communication?

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# What can lifelogging tell us about media of communication?

❖ This presentation is the skeleton of a workshop session at the Institute for Research on Digital Learning at York University, Toronto (20 January 2015).

❖ This workshop presented observations, and asked for feedback on ideas for using lifelogging technology to tap into multimodal communication practices.
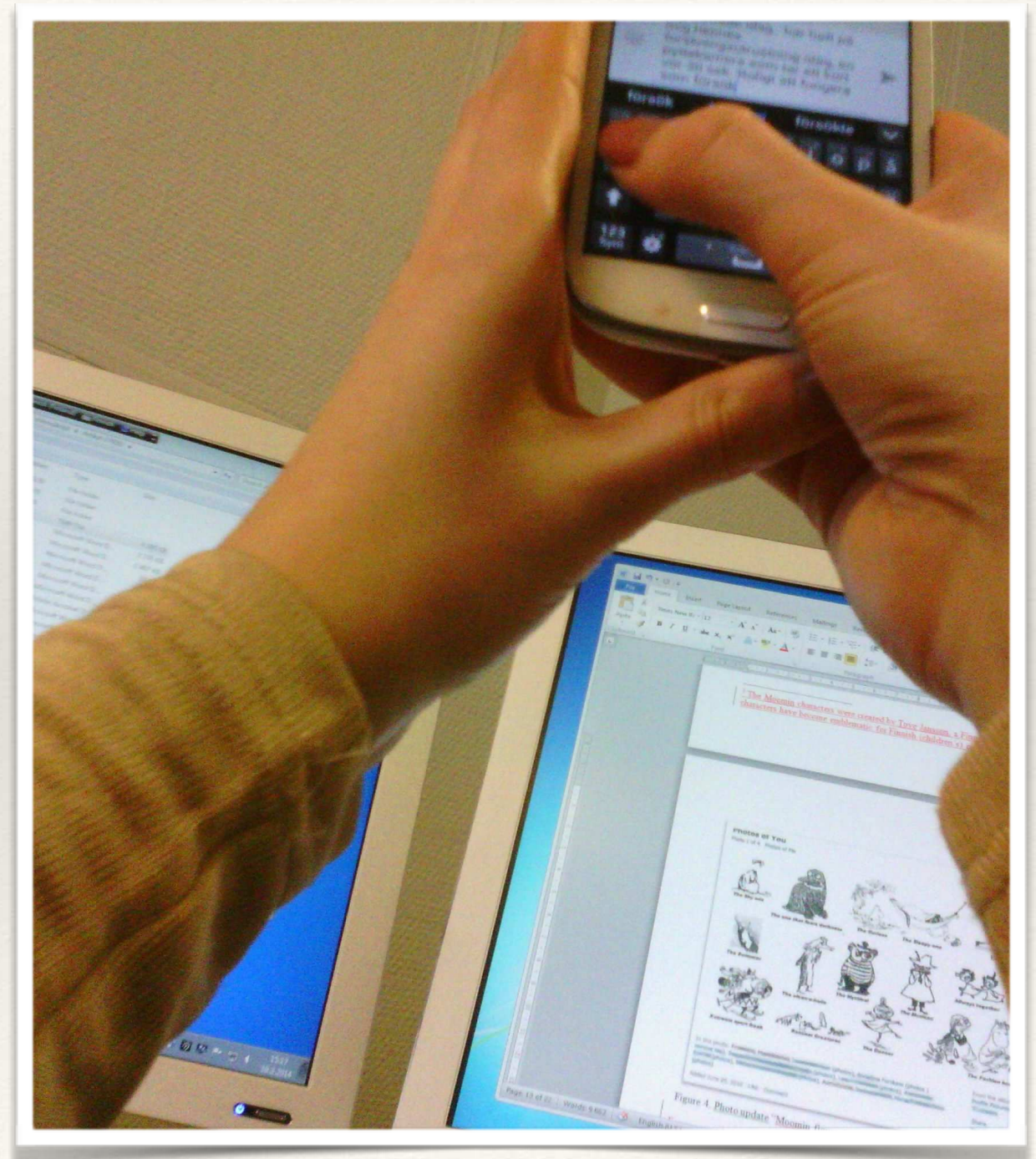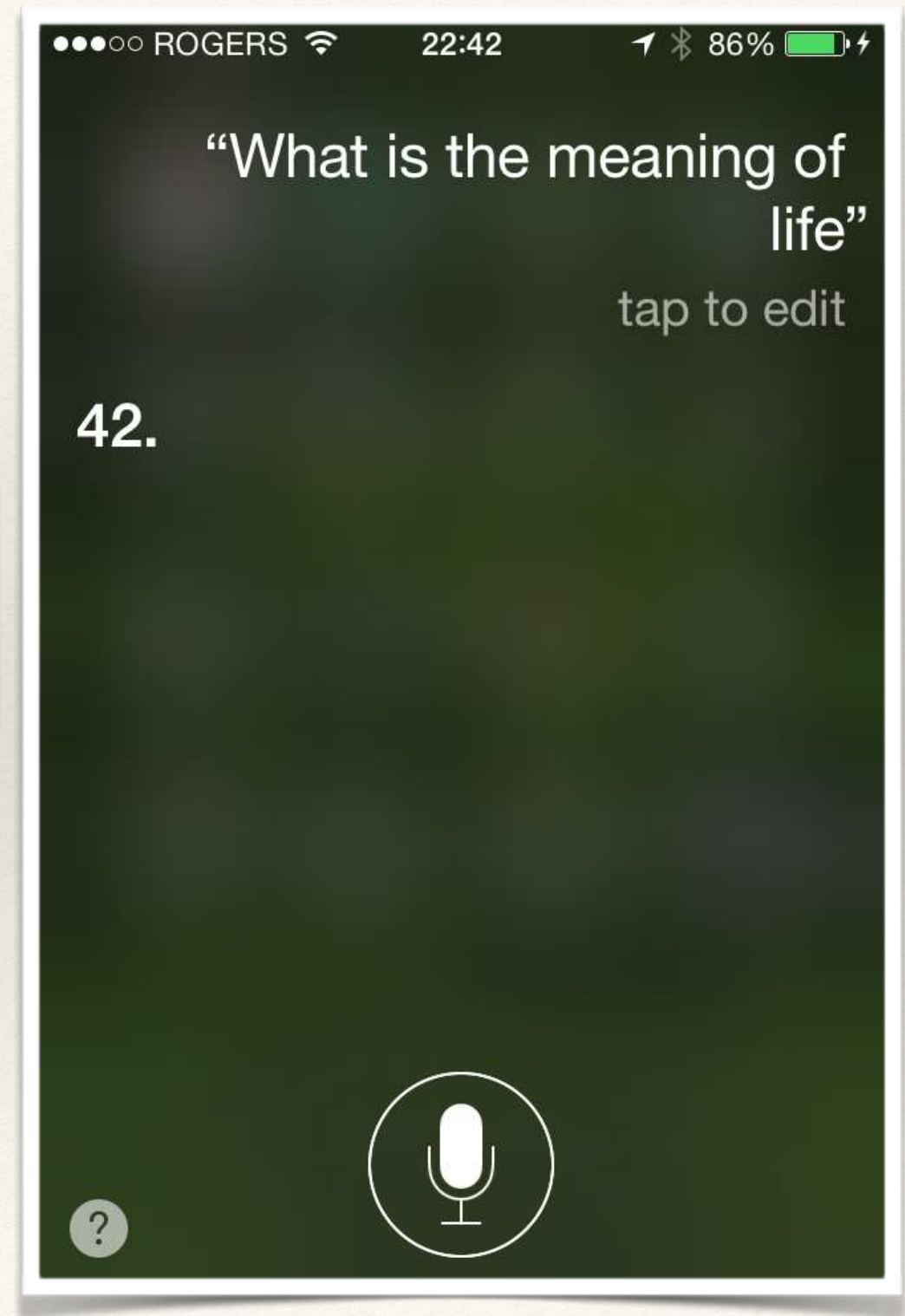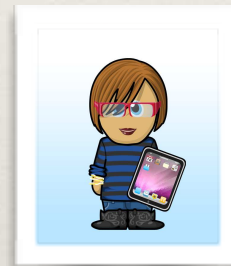
# Our evolving communication landscape

❖ Increasing *globalization* has brought people and their languages together in increasingly complex formations, facilitating cultural and linguistic fusion and hybridity. Et voilà ⇒

❖ *Digitization* has introduced new tools for communication, changing structurally and socially how we communicate with each other. :D

❖ The public *WWW* has changed access to knowledge; and speed of communication (& of language change & orthographic conventions - lol).

# Our evolving communication landscape

- *Web 2.0* has enabled interactivity and dynamic texts.
    - Wiki-based collaborative writing has confronted assumptions of authorship and authority. (btw I wrote that sentence myself ;))
- *Social media* has changed who we talk to and how we do so plus how we construct our identity/ies.
    - Multimodal interactivity has become generic.
- *Mobile devices* and *cloud computing* have altered the relationship between communication and context,
    - normalizing quotidian post-human mediation, e.g., GPS-enabled and voice-activated assistants. Are you listening Siri?
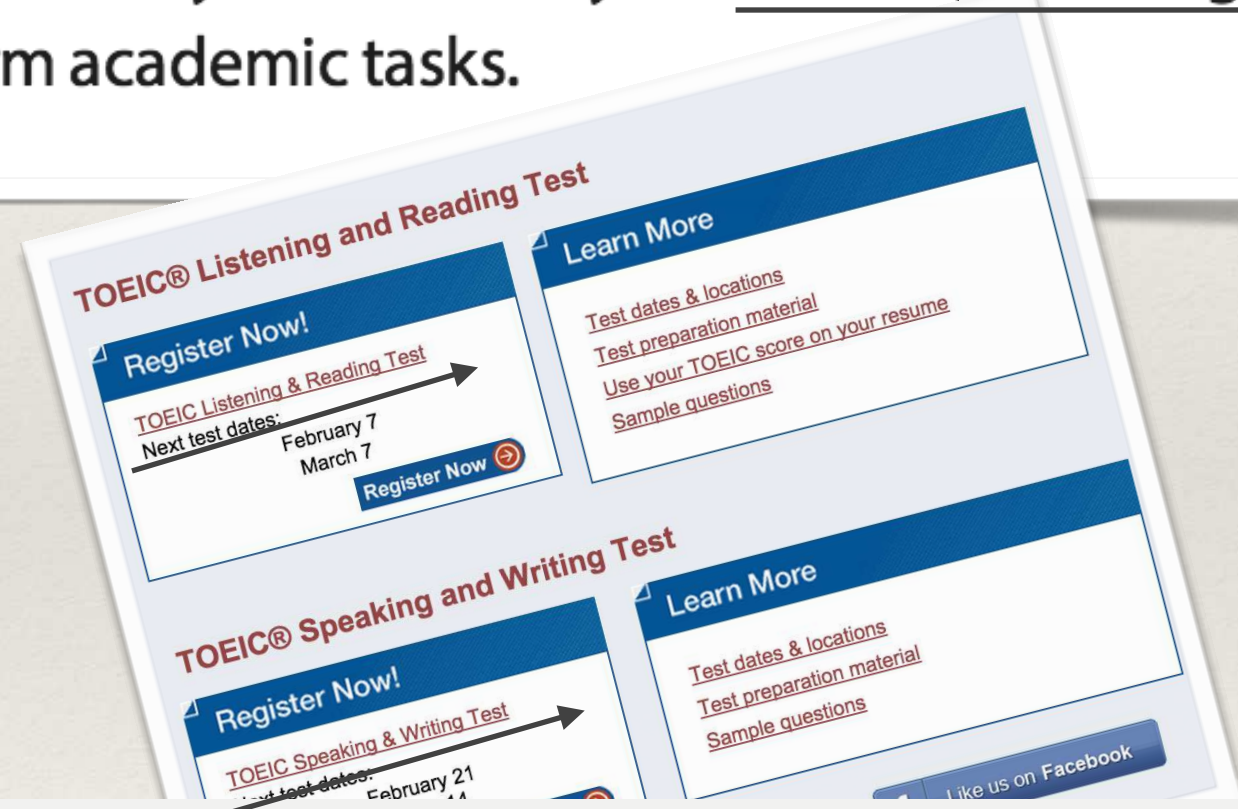    - The selfie stick is born… which may be a low point in civilization.

# How is the evolving communication landscape affecting notions of communicative competence?
## Check out English language testing ads...

## What Is the TOEFL iBT Test?

The TOEFL iBT test measures your ability to use and understand English at the university level. And it evaluates how well you combine your listening, reading, speaking and writing skills to perform academic tasks.

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## What is IELTS?

IELTS is the International English Language Testing System. IELTS conforms to the highest international standards of language assessment. It tests the four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking ...

# How is the evolving communication landscape affecting language teaching?

❖ While high stakes tests of English language proficiency are testing reading-writing-listening-speaking, the world is communicating multimodally. That includes internationally renowned linguists, such as David Crystal →

❖ van Leeuwen (2004) reminded us that multimodal analysis must move outside the traditional boundaries of language.
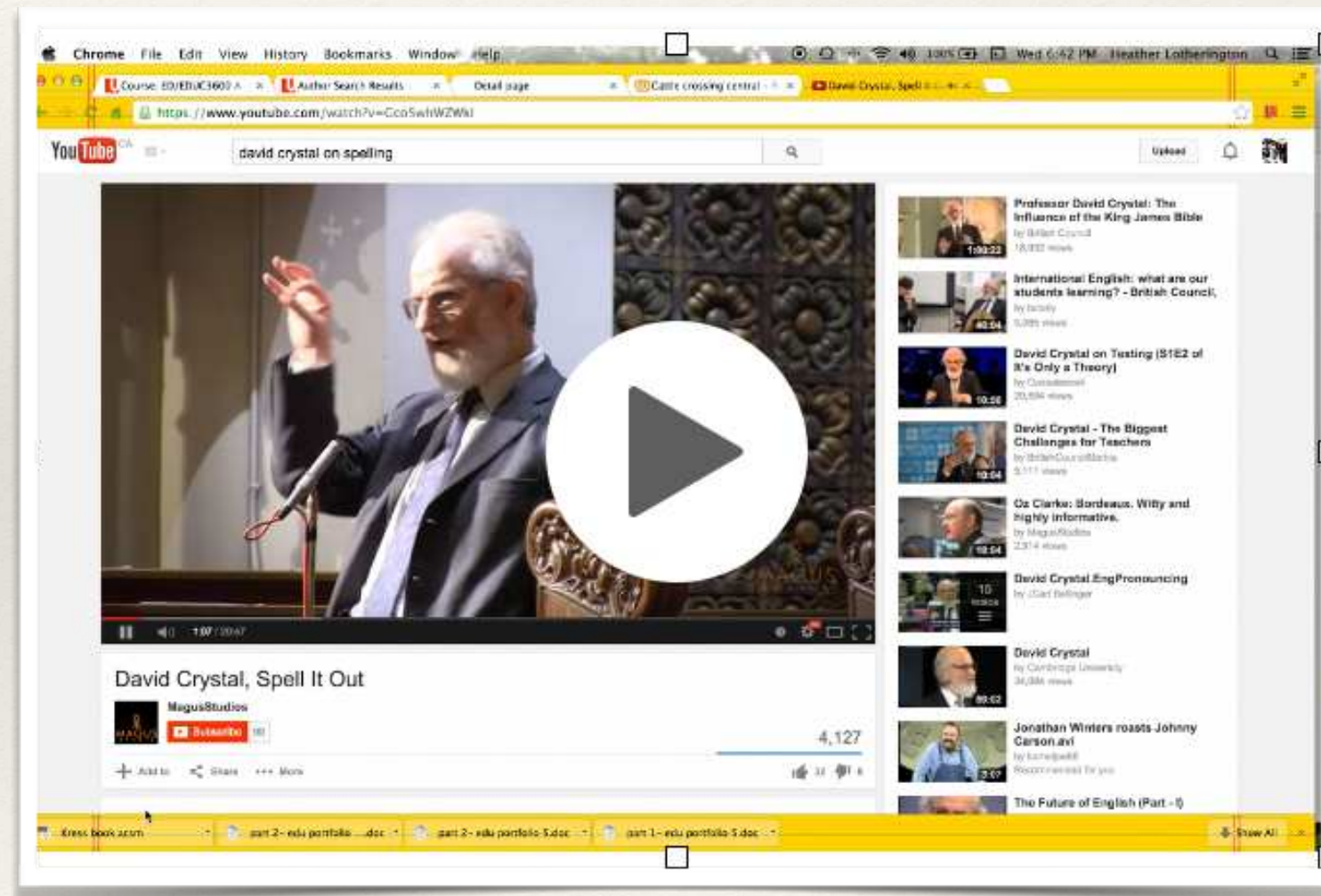
# The idea of *communicative competence*

- Communicative competence components (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain,1980):
  - language/grammatical (structure)
  - sociolinguistic (contextual sense)
  - discourse (textual coherence)
  - strategic (communicative compensations)
- Technical media of communication available at the time:
  - speech environments
  - print technologies
  - static voice and image recording playback
- Communication = language parsed into 4 skills
  - reading (visual)
  - writing (visual)
  - speaking (oral)
  - listening (aural)







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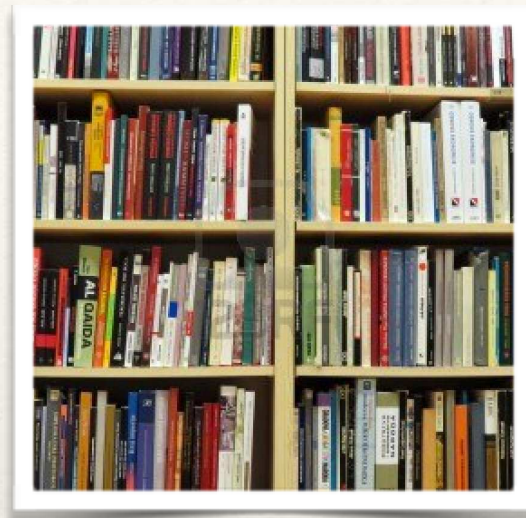
# How have technical media of communication changed?



**1980s**



**2015**

| 1980s | | 2015 |
|---|---|---|
| f-t-f<br>telephone | *interactive speech environments* | f-t-f<br>Skype/ Facetime<br>telephone<br>texting |
| static print technologies | *texts* | static print: paper & digital books<br>dynamic texts blogs; websites<br>multimodal interactive texts: fanfic; wikis;<br>videogames; social media, e.g., Facebook,<br>YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest |
| static voice recording & playback | *audio recording and transmissions* | digital recording apps; sites<br>voice activated apps<br>automated phone/ announcement<br>systems |
| moving image recording &<br>playback | *video recording and transmissions* | movie programs; presentation software/<br>sites<br>video-sharing social media: YouTube,<br>Vimeo<br>multimodal digital texts |

# How have communication skills changed?



1980s



2015

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| reading | *literate access* | accessing & creating multimodal, plurilingual texts on different devices and platforms in different languages (with translation software) |
| writing | *literate production* | read/write multimodal, plurilingual texts; collaborative authorship; multimodal programming; writing text that can't be read 👹 |
| speaking | *oral production* | texting; Skyping; multimedia presentation; YouTubes |
| listening | *aural access* | accessing podcasts, soundtracks; archived spoken language/s (even dead ones) & texts; accessing voice-activation with or without written text |

| CC1.0 | CC2.0 |
|---|---|
| language / grammatical | Multimedia competency |
| sociolinguistic | Collaborative communication |
| discourse | Agentive participation |
| strategic | Multitasking |

# Theorizing communicative competencies 2.0

Lotherington, H., & Sinitskaya Ronda, N. (2014). 2B or not 2B: From pencil to multimodal programming: New frontiers in communicative competencies. In J. Pettes Guikema, & L. Williams (Eds.), *Digital literacies in foreign and second language education* (pp. 9-28). San Marcos, TX: Calico Monograph Series, 12.

Lotherington, H. (2014, April). *Rewriting communicative competence for the cloud.* Presentation at the Global Learning Alliance Conference, Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

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# Empirically researching new communicative competencies

❖ Natalia Ronda and I have theorized new communicative competencies based on educational research.

❖ What would empirical observation of daily communication indicate?

❖ How could we do this?

# Empirically researching new communicative competencies

❖ Lifelogging as a possible research tool?

❖ Lifelogging involves wearable technology. We are trying out the Narrative Clip, which captures still photos at 30 second intervals.

❖ What do photographs of ourselves engaged in communication tell us about how we communicate?

# Reading images:
## What can documentary lifelogging photography tell us?

- Documentary photographs tap "'uncoded' naturalistic representations" Kress & van Leeuwen (2006, p. 30).

- Lefebvre (2007) discussed the indexical aspect of photographs -

  - Peirce's (1991), functional trichotomy of signs:

    - icon (quality or likeness)

    - index (existential connection)

    - symbol (habit or law)

- Analysis of lifelogging photos assumes indexicality: what the photograph reveals is what existed in the focal frame of the lens

- Iconic and symbolic information can also be encoded in photographs.
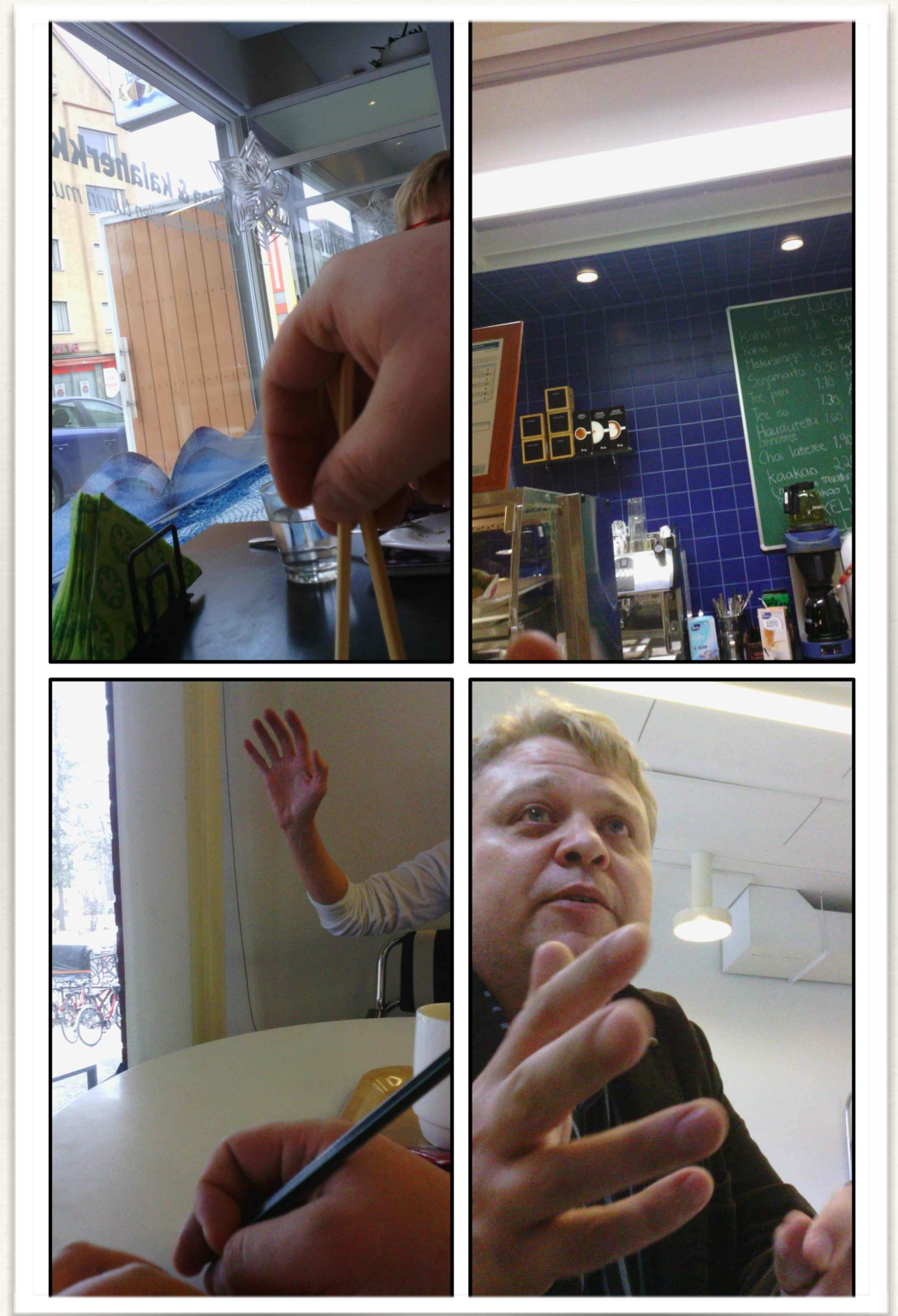
# Reading images: What can documentary photography tell us?

* Documentary photography is still spatial representation; action must be interpreted.
  * Duration is indicated only in terms of number of images during time taken.
  * Not all images turn out.
  * Nor do they necessarily process in order.
* Photos are taken from the perspective of the wearer
  * not at eye level,
  * not focused on action but on sightline.
  * social vantage point of wearer filters communication encounters
* What can we get from reading documentary lifelogging photos?
  * mediating technologies
  * interactive patterns (partially indicated)
    * type of communicative interaction
    * multiple simultaneous interactions
  * physical context (partially indicated)
  * social context (partial information from social perspective of wearer)
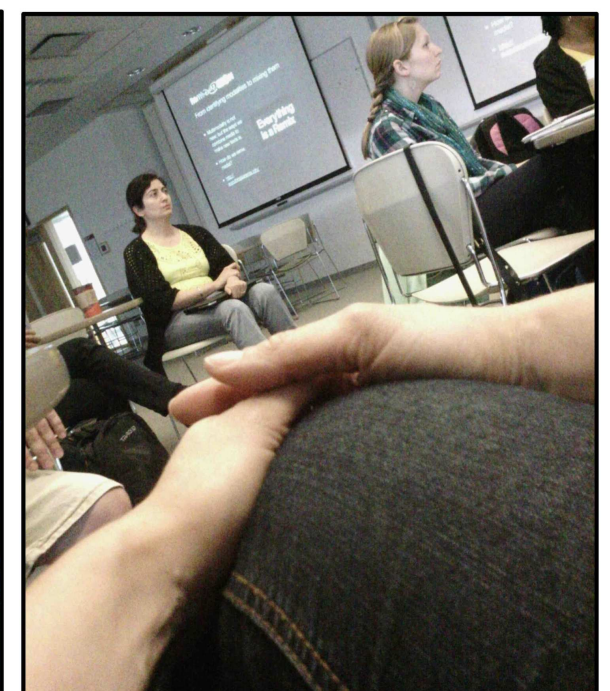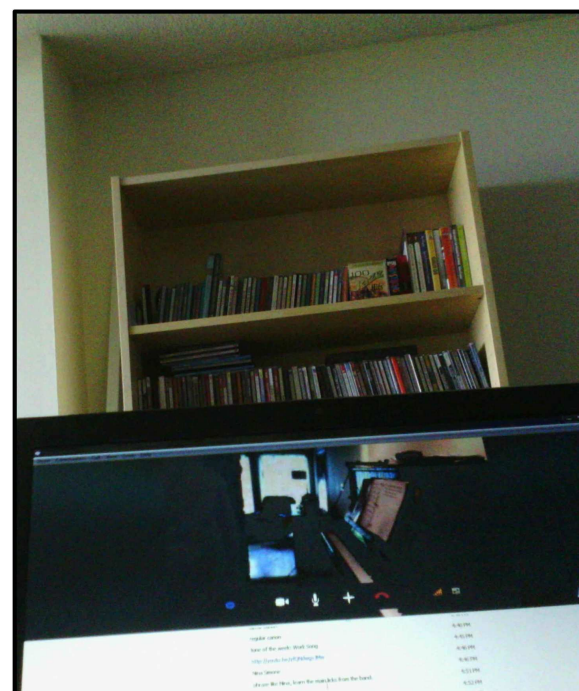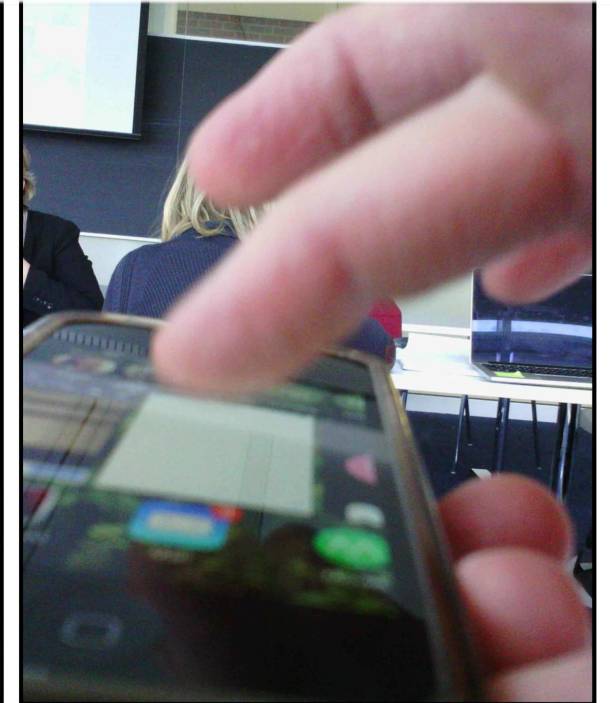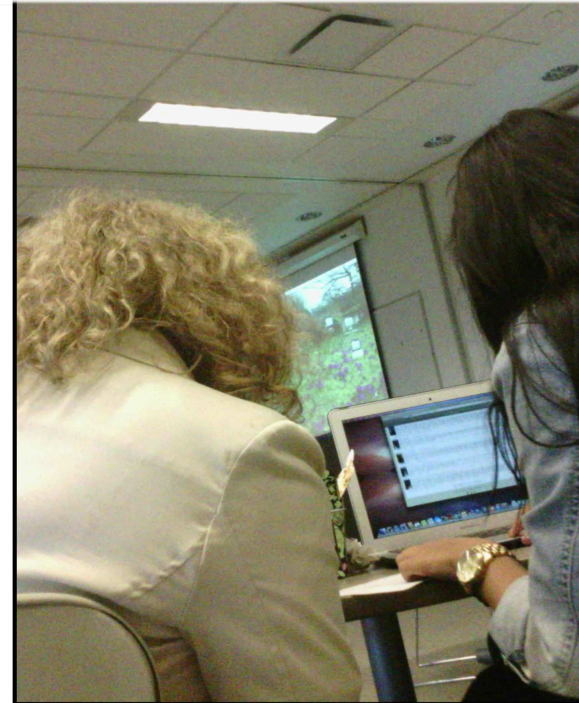
# An example… Oxford UK

- contexts: short philosophy summer course at Christ Church & sundry shopping/ sightseeing

- indexicality: mediating technologies

  - paper & pen; static print texts: commercial products; official descriptions

  - conspicuous absence of digital/ interactive signage, e.g., QR codes

  - iPhone

- iconicity: observations:

  - contexts of commercial and educational spaces:

    - display and patterning of commercial products

# What can lifelogging tell us about media of communication?

- ❖ I welcome your comments and ideas on how to analyze documentary photographs for what they tell us about how we are communicating with each other and the world around us.

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