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# Analyzing textual trajectories: Tensions in purpose and power relations

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## 1 Introduction

Textual trajectories are pervasive in social life. The academic workplace is full of them. While preparing this text, I have engaged in strings of interrelated e-mail discussions around marking, agreeing the entextualization of grades and feedback responses to students' written coursework for uploading to the virtual learning environment platform, in line with criteria in the departmental handbook. I have organized a conference reporting on a research project, representing two years of work with talk and text in PowerPoint presentations and textually supported discussion activities. I have attended a media training event which coached us explicitly in how to recontextualize academic work into a one-sentence interview-friendly "top line."

There are textual trajectories everywhere in daily life, too. A call to the police non-emergency line with a concern for an elderly neighbor led me into a Question-Answer-Typing event, exactly as described in Rock's paper, which opened up new trajectories involving other local agencies. Arranging a service and road test on a three-year-old car fulfilled the requirements of national bureaucratic legal systems, and began an annual cycle of reminder correspondence with the local mechanics. Completing multiple consent forms for a residential school trip meant puzzling over the form's requirements (what counts as a "medical condition"?), while trying to figure out reasons for the duplicate information required and understand where the various similar-but-different forms would end up being sent to.

## 2 Researching textual trajectories

Given the ubiquity of textual trajectories, the body of research from professional and work contexts collected in this Special Issue is very welcome. While the

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