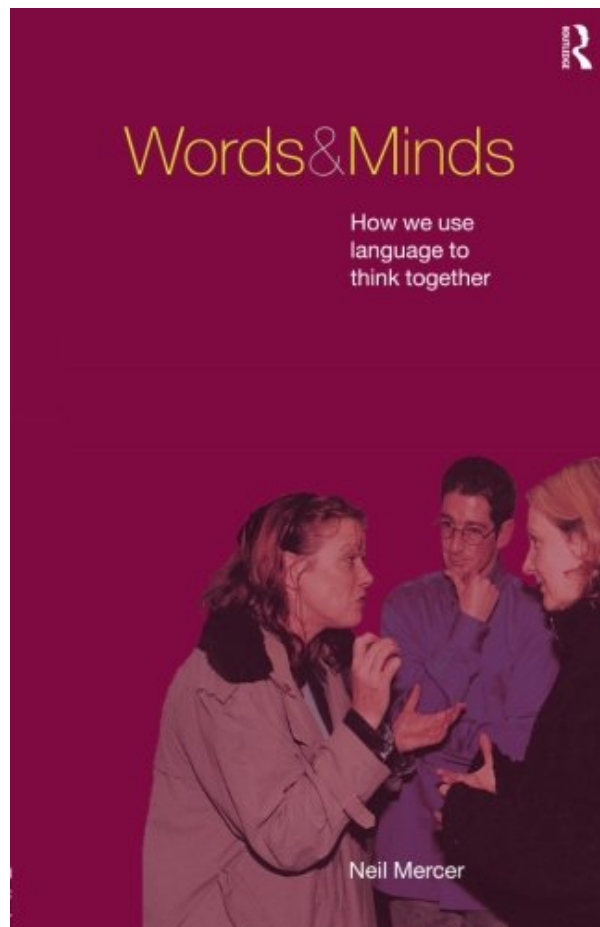


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# Words & Minds

How we use  
language to  
think together



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"All in all, this work is a successful combination of review and originality, accessible to those not already indoctrinated into the discourse of the close analysis of text, but also containing much of interest to those who are."

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## About the Author

Neil Mercer is Professor of Language and Communications at the Open University.

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## About the Author

Neil Mercer is Professor of Language and Communications at the Open University.

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Thinking great thoughts - together

By still searching

This book is about how human beings think together and, through the medium of language, jointly construct meaning. The author adopts a descriptive linguistic approach so if you are looking for a prescription for how to write or speak the 'Queen's English' then I suggest you look elsewhere.

It begins by looking, albeit briefly, at Vygotsky's seminal work on the relationship between language and thought, and continues by stressing the importance of context in the making of meaning. It then discusses the uses to which language has been put in the pursuit of power, influence and control, continues by exploring the contribution that living in communities has made to the development of collective thought and ends by examining the varied forms of dialogue that occur in different situations.

Though quite a slight book and somewhat 'academic' in tone, it is, nevertheless, and as might be expected, very well written. More importantly, though, it manages, succinctly, to summarize the latest developments in linguistics and language study relating to the connections between language and thought and certainly highly recommended for anyone wanting a `taster' before delving into weightier tomes!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Excellentlly Written

By Eric Stevens

Had to read this for a instructional technology class. Well written with a great flow, not too many citations to read around. Not just a book for understanding computer mediated communications (CMC), but a concise accord of where we are in the present with language and thinking together, thus building on the continual conversation started from the dawn of unrecorded human history towards the epoch of realization and understanding each other.

Specifically this book deals with language interactions and how people share with each other in common every day contexts through language exchange. The coined term "interthinking" evolves from this text: Shared knowledge between people, collective unconsciousness, collaborative conversations, and dialogue are all included. Conversational ground rules for CMC talk are also covered: one person talking, informal talk, legality boundaries, and CMC anonymity expression. Cumulative talk ideals state that we build upon each others conversation in controlled means, exploratory talk is critical constructive and joint endeavor, and finally disputational is merely egocentric discord with others. Mercer states that argumentation is a major way we do things through conversations.

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