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This project grew out of my interest in historic architecture. For this project, I looked at conversations that took place on a discussion forum found on the website [www.heatinghelp.com](http://www.heatinghelp.com). This site is devoted primarily to the hot water and steam heating systems found in many older homes and buildings. The design and operation of these systems are today considered something of a lost art. This online discussion forum is used by professionals in the heating and cooling industry as well as by homeowners and do-it-yourselfers to, among other things, solve technical problems and share experiences.

A number of theories and perspectives that I've encountered at SLIS provide a useful lens through which to view and understand the discourse and learning practices on display in this online forum. First, there are the theories and ideas from New Literacy Studies scholars such as Brian Street and Jim Gee. They write about the situated-ness of literacy; that acts of reading and writing have particular meaning and serve particular purposes in different contexts. In addition, Lev Vygotsky's social constructivist notions about education are also useful in understanding the role that this discussion forum plays in the lives of its users. The creation and sharing of useful knowledge and peer mentoring are a couple the key roles that this forum serves.