Part I
Introduction

Section Editor: Dan Suthers,
University of Hawai'i

This book is about a long-term collaborative effort known as the "productive multivocality project" that sought to engage researchers from different analytic traditions (i.e., multiple "voices") in productive dialogue with each other while analyzing shared data from group interactions in collaborative learning settings. It will be of interest to persons who want to understand and collaborate with colleagues from other traditions, to students who want to broaden their understanding of theoretical and methodological traditions available to them and how they might be brought into coordination, and to researchers who are interested in the particular learning settings and analytic results found in the five data corpora and associated analyses that make up the body of the book. Most significantly, the book offers a vision of how fields of study (such as the learning sciences) that are comprised of diverse traditions can counter tendencies towards fragmentation and achieve some level of coherence.

This first section of the book introduces the reader to the project on which this book is based and provides a guide to the book. Chapter 1, "The Productive Multivocality Project: Origins and Objectives," introduces the concept of multivocal analysis and why it is needed in the learning sciences, provides a brief historical account of the collaborations (series of workshops) out of which this work arose, and previews some of the major lessons learned in the form of problems encountered and strategies that we found useful for avoiding these problems while engaging analysts from multiple traditions with each other. Chapter 2, "Methodological Dimensions" details dimensions we used in our project and use throughout the book for describing different approaches to the analysis of interaction. Finally, Chap. 3, "A Readers' Guide to the Productive Multivocality Project," provides a preview of the book and a guide to using it as a resource for different purposes (e.g., for researchers who want to undertake multitradition collaborations themselves or students who want to learn about different analytic traditions). Perusal of Chaps. 1 and 3 should enable the reader to make effective use of the rest of the volume.