Innovative uses of global and local networks of linked computers make new ways of collaborative working, learning, and acting possible. In Group Cognition Gerry Stahl explores the technological and social reconfigurations that are needed to achieve computer-supported collaborative knowledge building—group cognition that transcends the limits of individual cognition. Computers can provide active media for social group cognition where ideas grow through the interactions within groups of people; software functionality can manage group discourse that results in shared understandings, new meanings, and collaborative learning. Stahl offers software design prototypes, analyzes empirical instances of collaboration, and elaborates a theory of collaboration that takes the group, rather than the individual, as the unit of analysis. Stahls design studies concentrate on mechanisms to support group formation, multiple interpretive perspectives, and the negotiation of group knowledge in applications as varied as collaborative curriculum development by teachers, writing summaries by students, and designing space voyages by NASA engineers. His empirical analysis shows how, in small-group collaborations, the group constructs intersubjective knowledge that emerges from and appears in the discourse itself. This discovery of group meaning becomes the springboard for Stahls outline of a social theory of collaborative knowing. Stahl also discusses such related issues as the distinction between meaning making at the group level and interpretation at the individual level, appropriate research methodology, philosophical directions for group cognition theory, and suggestions for further empirical work.

My Personal Review:
This book is, I may say, one of the kind of books I always wanted to have, to read and revisit for getting its golden nuggets. It is unique because it provides, from several different perspectives (technical as well as philosophical), deep insights in what is going on in computer-based collaborative applications, with emphasis on Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning. The need of collaborative applications is justified and analysed starting both from practice and theoretically. The text very well presents and analyses the valuable experience of the author in designing and implementing a wide range of applications in e-learning, groupware, artificial intelligence (expert systems and knowledge-based and text processing (Latent Semantic Indexing). This experience description may be better understood if we see the text almost as a saga ending with one of the main ideas of the book: knowledge building appears in verbal-mediated collaboration in small groups. The practical experiences are doubled by deep interdisciplinary theoretical considerations, including philosophy (integrating ideas from Heidegger, Vygotsky, Derrida, Bourdieu, Bakhtin, Adorno, etc.), learning sciences and sociology (e.g. Garfinkels ethnomethodology, and Schegloffs and Sacks conversation analysis). State of the art theories like activity theory, distributed cognition, situated learning, knowledge building, and group cognition are also integrated in the whole.

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Group Cognition: Computer Support for Building Collaborative Knowledge (Acting with Technology) by Gerry Stahl - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!