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Exploring boredom in higher education

Purpose;

The purpose of the paper is to explore boredom as a phenomenon in Danish higher education. Boredom is an issue, which has been discussed widely within many fields of research (Martin, Sadlo & Stew, 2006; Svendsen, 2005; Toohey 2011), not least within educational research (Robinson, 1975; Feldhusen & Kroll, 1991; Mann & Robinson, 2009). There is however a lack of ethnographic research on the phenomenon of boredom within higher education. Thus, the paper aims to bridge this gap with a nuanced inquiry into the phenomenon of boredom and the lived experiences by students in higher education connected to it.

Design/methodology/approach;

The investigation focuses on the lived experiences (van Manen, 2014) of students. Regarding boredom as a phenomenon in its own right (Martin, Sadlo & Stew, 2006), the study draws on the notion of remix methods (Markham, 2013) which denotes an experimental approach to ethnography. ‘Remix’ in this case implies that along with traditional in-depth participant observation and qualitative interviews, the data set also encompasses analysis of cultural artifacts such as online groups, videos, pictures, internet memes and radio shows. Furthermore, in the quest for a more fulfilling description of boredom, the paper juxtaposes and intertwines the empirical inquiries with other ethnographic studies on boredom (De Lauri, 2014; Orrantia 2012; Jervis et al., 2003), the philosophical works of Levinas (1978), Nietzsche (2012) and Svendsen (2005), and educational philosophers Freire (2013), Barnett (2007) and Bengtsen (2014).

Findings;

In line with existing research (Mann & Robinson, 2009), the paper argues that boredom can be viewed not as the result of having nothing to do, but rather of having nothing to do that one likes. Furthermore, the paper proposes that boredom is a key component in an entanglement with other related phenomena like fatigue, disengagement, indifference, resignation, randomness and experiences of irrelevance or overwhelmedness. This entanglement of experiences is captured and investigated through the notion of darkness as suggested by Bengtsen & Barnett (2015). The study indicates that boredom in fact is not merely a product of student disinterest or dislike, but rather a phenomenon emerging from complex interconnections between social structures, personal dispositions, cultural discourses and embodied sensations.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

This study aims to provide a greater sensitivity to students’ experiences of boredom within higher education studies. There is, however, a need for more research into the many related ‘dark’ experiences in education within the boredom entanglement.

Practical implications (if applicable);

The study holds the potential to inform educational design processes and help designers take into account the phenomenon of boredom among students.
References


Yalız Akbaba, Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany

Ethnic Minority Teachers - Coping with doublebinding ethnicity in school

Purpose;

Usually, discourses of migrants and foreigners children in school insinuate educational problems, social deviances and cultural incongruities (Hamburger, Mecheril). This stigma (Goffman) is interestingly reversed when talking about ethnic minority teachers, discursively produced to be a solution to educational inequality in German schools. The paper analyses the double-bind (Watzlawick) teachers are faced with when acting against the background of this paradox: while the interpellation (Althusser) calls them to make use of being a foreigner as an advantage, acting as foreigners comes with subtle impediments disabling them to use potential advantages.

Design/methodology/approach;

The study methodologically draws upon the established ties between practice theory (Schatzki) and discourse analysis (Foucault, Wrana, Reckwitz). The ethnic minority teachers job is entangled in two socially relevant structures, theoretically framed as follows: first, in institutional (school as organization) and pedagogical (teaching as profession) structures (Vanderstraeten, Helsper). Second, within the dispositive of Otherness (Thomas-Olalde/Velho, Mecheril) as a powerful frame of reference, teachers have to position themselves in.

Ethnographical data was produced during a two-year-period of field observation (Atkinson, Hammersley) in schools for the PhD-project about Ethnic Minority Teachers - Coping with doublebinding ethnicity in school. During alternating phases of field observation and theoretical reflections and coding in the tradition of Grounded Theory (Strauss/Corbin), the analytical focus sharpened with an emphasis on paradoxical demands teachers have to deal with.

Findings;

The paper reveals a general structure of double binds teachers marked as Others have to cope with. It then analyses a thickly described scene under the perspective of a specific double bind a teacher is confronted with while having to deal with racism herself. She is impeded to act against racist experience a black student is entangled in, because her sayings and doings will be interpreted against the background of being affected by racism herself. Dealing with the issue, she will forfeit parts of her capacity to act and hence not be of any pedagogical assistance; not dealing with the issue, she retains her capacity to act but without assisting the student.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

Within analyses of power structures and their marginalized subjects, the researcher’s privileged position constitutes the main research limitations. Claims to speak for the other yield what was criticized as Writing culture (Clifford) opening out into the crisis of representation (Berg/Fuchs) and the question if the subaltern can speak at all (Spivak). The major limitation of the study is the challenge how to depict marginalization, exclusion and racism teachers face, while sustaining the perspective on subjects capable of articulation (Hall) and on hegemonic orders being fluid and changeable.
Practical implications (if applicable);

A paradox that structurally binds teachers of color has practical implications for teacher training in migration societies. Power structures must be critically analyzed, and the own positioning within majority and minority relations must be reflected.

Social implications (if applicable);

Interviews with ethnic minority teachers reveal these teachers to be specifically sensitive towards inequality in school, aiming to actively prevent it (Georgi/Ackermann/Karaka). As the findings show, these intentions are thwarted by structural impediments built on hegemonic orders. One of these orders can be named racism. The problem about talking (and not talking) about race at work, discussed as the Color Bind (Foldy/Buckley), is for the white to be afraid of unintendedly discriminating against people of color and for people of color to be subject of discrimination once again. Social implications thus involve to enhance competencies to talk about race and racism at work whenever not talking about it will effect agency.
Deborah Albon, London Metropolitan University; Anette Hellman, University of Gothenburg

Of routine consideration: ‘Civilising’ children’s bodies via food events in Swedish and English early childhood settings

Purpose

Inspired initially by the work of Elias (1994) on ‘civilising processes’, this paper draws on a project in which an English and a Swedish researcher examine ethnographic data on mealtimes from two of their respective studies carried out in early childhood (EC) settings. Despite the differing contexts, the data show marked similarity in the way children’s bodies become subject to ‘civilising’ during food events such as mealtimes.

The paper contends that mealtimes are times of the day when young children’s bodies are subject to a high degree of disciplining when compared to the ‘free’ play elements of the day (Ben-Ari, 1997). Underpinning this is a pervasive construction of children’s bodies as ‘unruly’ (Grosz, 1994), in need of ‘civilising’ and bringing under control. And this construction impacts on how educators are ‘expected’ to manage mealtimes in their settings. Although there is preoccupation with nutrition at the current time across both countries, an area which has received less attention is the practices employed at mealtimes which serve to ‘over civilise’ children’s bodies. Our studies set out to address this.

Although theoretically we draw upon the work of Elias, our analysis aims to build on his work in a number of ways: we wish to highlight the generational inequalities inherent in the idea of ‘civilising processes’ and further to this, we wish to highlight young children as agentic in negotiating, subverting and enforcing mealtime ‘rules’.

Design/methodology/approach

The present article draws on data from two ethnographic studies. The Swedish study was undertaken in four Swedish EC settings with children aged from one - five years of age and the English study involved data collection in four English EC settings with children aged from 6 months-5 years. Both projects involved participant observation of mealtimes as well as interviews and informal conversations with educators and children. The data from the individual projects were initially collected and analyzed separately.

We consider collective and meta-ethnography to be a fruitful point of departure for the present paper (c.f. Beach et al., 2013). The analysis which forms the basis of this paper is based on a collective process where we jointly read through our field notes (c.f. Gordon et al. 2006) and identified common patterns in order to understand the processes whereby children’s bodies become ‘civilised’ via mealtimes in Swedish and English EC settings.

Findings;

Cultural rules around what is eaten, how it is eaten and how the body should ‘perform’ in space and time are evident in the data. In sharing data across two projects our analysis demonstrates various ways in which children’s bodies come to be subject to ‘civilising processes’ in EC settings and points to children ‘becoming’ ‘Swedish’ or ‘English’ via mealtimes. However, our data also points to myriad ways in which children negotiate, subvert, and enforce these ‘rules’.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);
The main intention here is not to make a comparison between two countries, but rather to explore how global discourses about children, food and eating manifest locally in EC settings in Sweden and England. Hence, our analytic focus is on glocal meanings (Robertson, 2012) relating to young children’s bodies and how they come to be ‘civilised’ via mealtimes in EC education.

Implications for practice

We argue that attending to practices around mealtimes offers an especially interesting focus through which to examine adult-child relations and the kinds of ‘rules’ deemed ‘appropriate’ for young children to inculcate. We call for a concept of ‘reflective care’ and the need to afford routines such as those pertaining to mealtimes careful consideration.

References:


Charity Anderson, The University of Chicago

An Examination of Low-Income Adult Students’ Experiences in the Clemente Course in the Humanities

Purpose

Low-income adults are increasingly targeted for vocational training and basic education courses, which are often dubiously marketed as pathways out of poverty and into jobs (Mattson, 2002). The Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities (Clemente) has little in common with the market-driven ideology that undergirds most adult learning today; instead, it is built on the belief that liberal education can offer students the possibility of personal change by fostering critical reflection (Zwerling, 1992). At 30 independently-run sites across the US, Clemente provides socially and economically marginalized adults a free, two-semester, college-credit bearing course in art and American history, literature, and philosophy. Requirements for potential students are few; they must (1) be ≥ 18 years old, (2) live in a household with an income ≤ 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, and (3) be able to read a tabloid newspaper.

This two-year, multi-site ethnography aims to answer: (1) How do low-income, historically marginalized adults change or develop, if at all, through their participation in Clemente? (1a) What is the relationship, if any, between students’ course participation and their engagement as citizens and, where applicable, as parents? (2) What programmatic practices or features are most meaningful to participants, and how do those practices or features operate?

Design/methodology/ approach

This project takes a grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis. Data are primarily gathered through fieldwork; namely: (1) Participant observation of two course sites: Chicago, IL (2014-2015) and New York City, NY (2015-2016). (2) Informal conversations and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with students, graduates, drop-outs, and staff in Chicago and New York City. (3) Telephone interviews with students, graduates, drop-outs, and staff at other US course sites. (4) Focus groups with course directors from sites across the US. All told, data will include ~400 hours of participant observation during classes, field trips, faculty meetings, tutoring sessions, and other activities, as well as interviews with students and staff (n≈100).

Findings

Data collection will be complete in June 2016, however preliminary findings reveal nearly all students report that Clemente was a personally transformative experience. They come to see themselves as capable intellectuals, think more critically, interact more positively with their children, set goals for themselves, access the humanities in their communities (e.g., patronize museums and libraries; attend lectures), and express a sense of belonging in environments that before seemed off-limits. They report feeling more confident, gaining a clearer sense of direction for their lives, finding new jobs, returning to school, and joining community groups – all of which may spur students to more fully participate in the economic and political aspects of their communities.

Research limitations
A potential weakness of all qualitative research is that the researcher can never be absolutely certain that participants’ words and actions have been accurately interpreted; this is because communication is inherently imperfect, but also because the researcher can never fully escape her own subjectivity and biases. Reactivity and researcher bias therefore pose threats to validity. Additionally, while every effort has been made to interview students who did not complete the course, the nature of low-income adults’ lives coupled with the shame of dropping out make former students both difficult to locate and unlikely to consent to an interview. The sample is therefore skewed toward current students and graduates.

Practical and social implications

This study seeks to add to our knowledge of how to better engage disenfranchised adults as democratic citizens and parents; it seeks to examine how rigorous educational opportunity – not remedial or compensatory programs – might act as an impetus for personal transformation and consciousness-raising among the historically marginalized. Better understanding students’ experiences may challenge long-held assumptions about who is capable and deserving of intellectual challenge. Furthermore, humanities education is in a state of contraction. This can be seen as a crisis for education and democracy, as liberal education cultivates citizens’ ability to think critically and independently and to empathize with others – outcomes particularly salient for disenfranchised adults and communities (Nussbaum, 2010; Shorris, 2000). For educators, service providers, and community-based institutions, the results of this study illuminate ways to better engage a seemingly disengaged population. Free humanities programs may function as a positive intervention for adults who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.
Using iPads in a cooperative learning approach: Implications in the students’ self-regulation processes.

Purpose;

The main aim of this ongoing ethnographic piece of research is to study how the iPad contributes to the development of the cooperative learning (CL) methodological approach, particularly to the enrichment of the metacognition as an essential element of this approach. We would like to analyze the impact of this mobile technology in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom through the students’ multimodal narrative productions and understand its contribution to the development of a type of learning based on the metacognition as a multimodal narrative process. We would also like to investigate the role of the iPad in the development of the students’ self-regulation learning processes.

There are two elements of reference key in the present piece of research: (a) the role of the iPad as a sociocultural resource mediating in the students’ actions -the multimodal ways of narrating in particular-, and (b) the self-regulation of the pupils’ learning processes as an action mediated by this resource.

Examples of experiences using mobile technologies which study the processes of learning generated by them in school contexts are still scarce. For this reason, it is important to explore and analyse didactic proposals which incorporate formative tasks in the classroom using the iPad, such as this case.

Methodology:

The present piece of research is an urban school ethnography in a private school in Madrid (Spain) with secondary students (10th grade) in the EFL classroom. They work under a CL approach with iPads in a 1:1 format.

The development of the present ethnography follows two groups of students. Two groups were selected because the ethnographic process of building knowledge is based on contrast (Velasco & Díaz de Rada, 2009). This will allow us to study the results of the same actions in different and unique contexts within the same school. In this way, we will be able to observe discrepancies and similarities by means of the teacher/researcher’s field work and participant observation, which will validate the process of analysis and interpretation of data (Goetz & Lecompte, 1998).

Participant observation, questionnaires, interviews and video recordings will be the strategies and techniques used to collect information. These data collection techniques will guarantee the validation from the ETIC perspective, the researcher’s view. However, the EMIC perspective –the native view- is foremost in this research. The students’ own productions will be subject to elicitation processes, more specifically to the meanings the students grant to images or any other way of multimodal representation, such as video, voice, music, etc. to represent and communicate their processes of self-regulation. The key factor is taking into account that the access to a series of data should necessarily be developed from elicitation processes to respect the native’s point of view, crucial in visual anthropology (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015). This way of working will contribute to strengthen the triangulation of data from a third point of view.
Findings:

The findings of the present research will help to improve EFL classrooms working with iPads within a CL approach. It will also contribute to the development of technologically intelligent classrooms, as well as understand the uses and ways of learning generated by them. We understand that another important contribution of this research is to discriminate which uses of the binomial CL+iPad are relevant and valuable for the students.

Research limitations:

An important process in the development of this ethnography will be the process of estrangement, vital to obtain our objectives: everyday life becomes strange. It should be taken into account the researcher combines both roles in the same person: teacher of English and researcher. Data collection and class recordings will be analyzed by an external person, a member of the IMECA group to guarantee the authenticity of the analysis of data.

References:


Roma children and youth in the embrace of policies

Purpose;

The research focuses on the discursive and regulative effect of Roma educational (and not) policies on the lived experiences and strategies of Roma students and the other actors of education (students, teachers, families, NGOs, etc.) on the urban margins of Naples (Italy) and Pécs (Hungary).

On one hand, it focuses on the narratives and strategies of Roma children and youth who live in urban peripheries and tries to understand the effect of Roma policies on them (always in relation to other policies). On the other hand, it looks at the way local actors of educational contexts respond to, resist to, redesign or adapt to these policies in their everyday life. The paper deconstructs ‘culture’ and ‘integration’ and connected terms regarding Roma student’s education.

Design/methodology/approach;

An ethnographic fieldwork has been carried out in the selected neighborhoods since 2011. (Preliminary findings at the OEC 2012 and an analysis of an educational project’s experience written together with a local activist have been presented at the OEC 2013). The research itself is an engaged ethnography with strong elements of collaborative research. The meaning of collaboration itself has been defined in several different ways since 2011, including collaborative research methods in the classroom, school and afterschool activities.

Findings;

When talking about the “Roma question”, identity, culture, integration and several other categories emerge both in policy discourses and in everyday conversations between teachers or activists. The analysis of the appropriation of these terms, their connection to local experiences, contexts and own competences of local actors, can help us to understand the processes in which important scientific categories that were born to interpret complexity become instruments of sustaining or even creating discriminative practices when they encounter the lack of instruments, resources, the different interests and inner and external pressures on local level. The case of education and Roma students therefore offers a wide range of possibilities to analyze how categories related to culture and integration get sense in local discourses and strategies, e.g.: ‘early school leaving’, ‘early marriage’, ‘segregation’, ‘disadvantages’, ‘poverty’.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

The way we speak about Roma and the way they are approached through ‘policies’ seem to share strong historical roots within Europe, moreover in the era of EU level Roma strategy and EU-level networking regarding Roma issues, it is not surprising that both in academia and policy-making certain terms have an ‘international career.’ Still, doing a comparison based on two local case studies, and looking for the traces of policy (and scientific) categories in practice implies several risks. In my paper I am going to reflect in detail on these concerns. Similarly, I will engage critically with my position as a researcher and my involvement. Moreover, the collaboration itself needs to involve a very strong reflection on the power
structures and discrimination and puts the researcher under a continuous pressure to revise the choices of collaboration.

While collaboration means also sharing detailed information about the research purposes, constructing questions together, one of my strongest concerns is how much do the scope on Roma students cause distortions: leads the actors either to hide or even the contrary: to over represent ‘Roma issues’.

Practical implications (if applicable) and Social implications (if applicable);

Studying side by side with the different actors, in this research meant creating spaces of collaboration for collecting data and analyzing it. It brought up information, perspectives and interpretations that usually remain hidden, often simply by breaking the everyday routine and introducing new channels and instruments of interaction. It can be interpreted as a way of making political certain issues on local level by highlighting them and provoking critical reflection on them by the local actors themselves, for which I will give concrete examples in my paper. On the other hand, it can offer some precious in-depth information about the implementation of policies on local level, therefore to some extent can be generalized to a wider public, including educational professionals and policy-makers.
Purpose;

Distinct from other qualitative approaches due to its unique focus, process and output (Wolcott 1999) ethnography is one of the most amenable research methodologies and research products within educational research; it is also one of the most contested. There are continual debates about how educational ethnographies should be conducted and presented (Walford, 2008). Recent deliberations encourage the use of visual research methods, participatory techniques and creative means of gathering data. This paper argues that while the importance of the traditional written field note remains as a means of gathering, interpreting and presenting ethnographic data, other methodologies and products offer exciting additions to the absolute need to ‘hang around’ and ‘spend time’ in the field to inductively explore the everyday life of participants in one or more spheres. The depth and insight that observational data can make to an ethnographic study is difficult to gain via other research methods (Seymour-Smith 1986). However, ethnography’s multi-method approach to research means that while observation is a useful tool that always feature in the ethnography’s armoury, it is only one of the many tools that an ethnographer has at their disposal. Visual, and participatory, methods are increasingly becoming a prevalent feature of ethnography, especially when researching with young people and children and is thought to be a useful tool, when reflexively implemented, to unearth children’s ‘voice’ (Clark and Moss 2001; Coates 2004).

Design/methodology/approach;

Data is drawn from two ethnographies conducted by the authors. The first draws on two stages of a longitudinal ethnography with a multi-ethnic school in the North of England and incorporates two periods of fieldwork with the same group of children when they were in their Reception year (Barley, 2014) and then again in Year 4. Based on the pedagogical principles of ‘sustained shared thinking’ (Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva 2004:6) children collaboratively designed research activities which were used to initiate research conversations. These data were then collaboratively analysed alongside more traditional hand-written fieldnotes.

The second draws on a Leverhulme Trust Funded 3 year ethnography that explored the experiences of NEET young people in Northern England (Simmons, Thompson and Russell 2014). Whilst the main corpus of data included participant observation hand-written field notes in the traditional sense, life cycle maps and photographs also were utilised as a way of engaging these ‘hard-to-reach’ youth and presenting their voice.

Findings;

This paper argues that when ethnographers open their minds to the plethora of research methodologies available to them in their tool kit, rich and valid data ensues in the most unexpected and delightful ways. This paper highlights that using visual and participatory methods as a way of eliciting data can when analysed alongside ethnographic observations produce rich and nuanced data that allows ethnographers to access young people and children’s voices. By creating visual participatory data, in this way, participants are able to influence the course of a study as their position within the research project shifts reducing power differentials between the ethnographer and participants.
References;


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**Being a participant in children’s lives: Reflections from an ethnographic study on literacy practices in an Indian village**

**Purpose:** Ethnographers become a part of the lives of the people they wish to learn about. The nature of this participant observation varies from one study to another and is guided by both research aims and practical considerations. At the same time, ethnographers are encouraged to maintain a marginal role in their research settings in order to gain insider insight into participant lives and also minimize dangers of over-rapport (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007).

This paper discusses the methodological implications of doing participant observation with 10-year old children in a resource poor, rural setting in India. While the intention behind advocating a marginal role of the researcher can be appreciated, I find that there is a need to reconceptualise ‘marginality’ when researching with children. A researcher who enters children’s homes, playgrounds, neighbourhood, and classrooms, showing interest in the ‘ordinariness’ of their lives, and does not label what children are up to as ‘nothing’ or ‘a mere waste of time’ cannot, but expect children to reciprocate with the same interest and curiosity. In such a situation, the researcher becomes important to the children and is prevented from being a ‘fly on the wall’. To further elucidate my point, I will also discuss how I became an ‘insider’ to their lives: the learnings and the challenges this involved, and also how my ‘outsider’ identity was not always an impediment?

**Design/methodology/approach:** The paper draws on a study which explores the relationship between home and school literacy practices of children in a village in India. The methods include participant observation in unstructured home settings, where boundaries between the home and the neighbourhood are not clearly defined, as well as in structured school settings. They also include spontaneous, informal conversations with parents and children and more structured interviews with teachers. Children’s written work at school and the ‘toys’ they built at home have also been utilized.

**Background to the study:** Literacy is no longer simply viewed as a set of neutral, decontextualized cognitive skills but as a set of practices which are situated within social, cultural, historical and political contexts (Gee, 2012). Research from India focuses on literacy within the school (e.g. Dyer, 2008). Furthermore, this research engages with teacher’s beliefs and practices about literacy, and the child’s experiences and point of views have rarely been explored. Empirical evidence also suggests that teachers do not view children as capable of learning since they feel they come from deficient backgrounds.

Research which has focused on home literacy practices of children from marginalised contexts, in the developed world, has provided alternate views of children’s capability and literacy learning and emphasised that what children do within homes and in the community can provide teachers with “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez, 1992) for their classrooms.

This study, thus, explores both home and school literacy practices of children in a village in India and asks the following questions:

What is the relationship between the home and school literacy practices of children in rural India?
• What is the nature of home and school literacy practices?

• What is the nature of discourses that shape the home and school literacy practices?

• Is there an interplay between home and school literacy practices, and if so, what form does it take?


When Marx set out to portray capitalist society in its totality and in terms its fundamental nature, it was a conscious act to begin with an analysis of commodities, for at this stage in history there was no problem that did not fundamentally lead back to the ‘mystification’ of commodity-structure, where what was a relation between people took on the character of a thing and acquired ‘a phantom objectivity’ and an autonomy that concealed every trace of its fundamental nature. According to Marx: A commodity is a mysterious thing because in it the objective character stamped upon the product of labour appears as a social relation existing between the products of labour. ‘A definite social relation between men assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things.’ (Marx, Capital I, p. 72.). The very special commodity was that of labour power. Through this commodity the productive powers of labour appear as the creative power of capital. This paper explores the value and possibilities of ethnography in relation to these kinds of mystification.

We have chosen the name ethnographic explanatory critique for this method. It involves the identification, theorization, explanation and criticism of the mechanisms in society that generate the conditions for socio-cultural tendencies that shape consciousness, ideology and irrational and discriminating practices. It is about unmasking how particular cultural forms of understanding and practice evolve and materialise and there is a commitment to try to enhance the capacities people to question and break free from the conditions that prevent their human flourishing. The method of ethnographic explanatory critique draws in this effort from the philosophy of Critical Realism, as we seek to establish the method of ethnography to identify the cultural manifestations in obscuring material social relations, the ways they operate, the effects they have and how they may be undone.

Mechanisms in this context are deep unobservable causal structures, reasons or belief systems that have the power to generate tendencies for qualitative changes to consciousness with implications for action in the lived world (Maisuria, 2015). Identifying these mechanisms leads to a level of analysis, which entails tentatively speculating on both the actual level of reality where tendencies are created and material empirical reality for the purpose of establishing (by discovering and exploring) a tentative heuristic theory and revolutionary strategy scholarship (Maisuria, 2015). In line with Marx’s (1943) critique of philosophy and science, the aim is not only to describe a field of play, it is also to develop understandings about manifestations of mechanisms in empirical reality – put another way this is the concern with the rules of the game at hand. The ultimate challenge is to help change understandings of the game and how and in whose interests it is currently played, in a quest toward fuller human possibilities for all (Beach, 2010). As Marx wrote: 'The internal obstacles seem almost greater than external difficulties. For even though the question "where from?" presents no problems, the question "where to?" is a rich source of confusion. Not only has universal anarchy broken out among the reformers, but also every individual must admit (that they have) no precise idea about what ought to happen. However, this very defect turns to the advantage of the new movement, for it means that we do not anticipate the world with our dogmas but instead attempt to discover the new world through the critique of the old. Hitherto philosophers have left the keys to all riddles in their desks, and the stupid, uninitiated world had only to wait around for the roasted pigeons of absolute science to fly into its open mouth.'
Taking Marx’s cue, ethnographic explanatory critique uses ethnography to try to explain how *common sense* theory and practices are made to seem both plausible and credible in a particular socio-cultural context (Maisuria, 2015). It is a method for being scientifically critical toward *common sense* that manifests as consciousness that seems rational but is antithetical to fuller human flourishing. *Common sense* is both a resource and potential strategic context by means of which, in the Gramscian sense, a ruling class are able to maintain their dominant hegemony. Ethnographic explanatory critique is designed to grasp the conditions that make it possible for the status quo to be existent and for constructing resistance that is effective for change. Drawing from our empirical research, we will argue that ethnographic explanatory critique can play an important role for political research, activism and theory building.
Georg Rißler, Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg; Dr. Martin Bittner, Nina Blasse, Nora Weuster, Europa-Universität Flensburg

Materializing a spoken world – Material and practice turn in Ethnography

Purpose

In this paper we shall argue that – given recent transformations in social theory that highlight the significance of the material turn – an ethnography of education needs to broaden its perspective by systematically taking materiality into account. Therefore, in consideration of various positions within educational ethnography, our purpose is to bring together different perspectives on materiality. For a long time materiality and notably material culture has disappeared from ethnography. Recently and in the context of a so called “practice turn” (Schatzki et al. 2001) the interest in materiality increases. Therefore, the demand for research activities to highlight the physical order in such educational fields as the school (Kalthoff 2014; Röhl 2012) is increasing. Practice theory – understood as a label embracing diverse authors (cf. Reckwitz 2002) – amongst other things enforces a considerable shift in its perspective on objects, things and material artefacts compared to other versions of social and cultural theories (e.g. textualism, mentalism (cf. Reckwitz 2000). Practice theories strongly stress an argument of materiality (cf. Reckwitz 2008), or a paradigm of things (cf. Hillebrandt 2015) and thus argue the case for focussing materiality (cf. Reckwitz 2005) by treating “materiality as part of society” (Schatzki 2010: 123).

It may seem trivial but practice theories highlight that more or less every practice deals with some material entity or another, that most practices would not even exist or at least change their shape and texture “without materialities of the sorts they deal with” (Schatzki 2012: 16). The quote from Theodore R. Schatzki highlights the shift in perspective: rather than mere objects of knowledge things are first and foremost things to deal with in practices. Practice theory therefore underlies the constitutive part of things, artefacts and the material in educational practices. Taking this configurational part of things as given, we propose a materialization of ethnography. We thereby support the claim of Hammersley and Atkinson that “we need to give equally appropriate attention to things” and “if we want to make sense of many social worlds, we ought to take account of how they are physically constituted” (Hammersley & Atkinson 2010: 135) on the basis of the practice theoretical argument of materiality. In particular, we build on Schatzkis version of a theory of social practices (cf. Schatzki 1996) and his conception of practice-arrangement bundles (cf. Schatzki 2002).

Since praxeology is not merely a theoretical perspective but also a research program (cf. Reckwitz 2003), the concept of bundles inherently expands observation and the empirical/analytical description of practices as a habitualized, tacit, implicit knowledge. Even more, the concept of bundles widens (other praxeological) concepts predominantly centred around knowledge and interaction (e.g. a praxeologische Wissenssoziologie and its documentary method (cf. Bohnsack 2008)).

Using empirical examples from different research projects in the field of education, we will present a ‘praxeography’ (cf. Schmidt 2012) that enhances the material and focuses on the public carrying out of practices with and amid material objects. To emphasize this methodological position, the focus of the analysis lays on physical artefacts that can be classified as ,things of behaviour’ in educational settings: for example the ,caution cards’, the ,traffic light of warning’ or the ,clean slate’. While discipilation in traditional settings of lessons are primarily based on spoken words, it seems to get more complex in non-traditional
settings characterized as ‘open’. The didactical demand for orientation on the subject and self-monitoring – that has brought up a self-governmentality in school education – introduces new materialities in school which unfold a manifold of effects. We will analyse these artefacts, these ‘things of behaviour’, searching for the materialised program of practice/action that is incorporated in the artefacts.

Findings

Our paper emphasizes the praxeological argument that if we want to understand social worlds we need to take materiality into account. Hence we bring forward the argument that materializing ethnography of education is vital to fully capture what is going on in educational settings.

Research limitations/implications

While both classic and most contemporary ethnographies of education predominantly disregard materiality and center attention on the spoken world – i.e. language, face-to-face interactions, communication, and the symbolic dimension – this paper attempts to gain deeper insights into educational practices by highlighting materiality as a crucial dimension.


Karen Borgnakke, University of Copenhagen

Ethnographic mapping the continuum of professional learning

Purpose;

Mapping the profession-oriented learning context using ethnographic approaches the project will explore the learning context and analyze the conflict between scholastic and practice learning.

Design/methodology/approach;

Conceptualized as a professional learning context both the scholastic and the clinical practice contexts are place for ongoing fieldwork and for case studies carried out in health education at University colleges and at universities. Focus for the ethnographic studies is strategies for organizational and pedagogical development in the different learning contexts called the scholastic, the profession oriented and the academic learning context (Borgnakke 2010).

Using ethnographic approaches to explore the learning context concepts of scholastic and practice learning and analysis of formal and non-formal learning situations are placed in the center of research reflections.

Concerning the ethnographic principle “following the field of practice” the relation between field, context and the ongoing learning process is strengthened though still related to the classic ethnographic approach (Marcus 1995; Hammersley 2006, Borgnakke 2013, 2015). In research terms 'following the field' therefor means following the intervention and the continuum of professional learning through scholastic and professional practical settings tracing the flows of learning activities and situations.

The empirical phases in the project are characterized by comprehensive cross cases and cross contextual field research where the ethnographic strategies are developed closely related to the practical learning context and research in innovative higher education (Borgnakke 2010, 2013a+b). The strength is that observations, interviews and material/product collections cover the teaching and learning practice and the organizational levels.

In terms of theory the project is anchored in a variety of learning theories conceptualizing the spectra from the learning student to the learning organization.

On this background the paper will map the characteristic learning activities, reflect their learning value and clarify the relation to theoretical concepts of learning in professional practices (Argyris, Schøn, Benner, Dreyfus, Lave, Wenger).

Covering the spectra of professional learning situations the empirical analyses will focus on: student focused resources, simulations, roleplay, The Standardized Patient to the students’ participative integration in health care teams and in the clinical practice.

Findings;

in the Health Sciences Education. Mapping the spectra of professional learning the empirical collection and findings will focus: the course, activities and milestones in the process.

The perspective for this paper is to sharpen the empirical analytical overview and close up analysis of involved activities, concepts and models of profession-oriented learning. The analysis of empirical materials from case studies will exemplify the continuum in professional learning and exemplify strategies and impact on milestones in the process of learning.

References

Cultural process and discourse practices in an online mathematics professional learning community

Purpose;

For the past twenty years, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been promoted in teacher education as a means to improve the integration of research into practice, transforming pedagogy, and thus, advancing student performance (Hargreaves, 2007). Yet, much of the emphasis on PLC has been on teacher agency, effective mentoring, the role of coaches, and the self-efficacy of teacher participation. This view of PLCs is prone to neoliberal appropriations where teacher agency is seen as very individual and issues of scale are not taken into consideration (Gershon, 2011). Even when the focus turns towards teacher practices and discourse (e.g., Ball & Cohen, 1999), these studies avoid examining PLCs as a cultural process. It should come as no surprise that teachers continually find themselves bound up in an endless blame game where they shoulder all the responsibility for the success or failure of the PLC.

This paper aims to rethink approaches to studying and understanding cultural process in PLCs with particular emphasis on those PLCs that exist via social media and online interactions. Previous experience with online and face-to-face (f2f) professional development has taught us that the most effective way to build a PLC is not in a top-down manner, but rather through gradual participation in mutually meaningful professional practice (Renninger & Shumar, 2002). As teachers take up the tools of digital media and contribute to each other’s knowledge, how do we as anthropologists capture and analyse their practices? In what ways do we make sense of these practices given the larger economic and political context of public education? In this paper, we offer insights into our emerging understanding of cultural processes through the analysis of digital media as well as traditional ethnographic field methods.

Design/methodology/approach;

This research draws upon data collected from a teacher professional development program in the United States, EnCoMPASS (Emerging Communities for Mathematical Practices and Assessment). This four-year program was initiated to cultivate an online community among mathematics teachers to encourage deep mathematical discussions around student thinking and learning. In creating and supporting a hybrid community of mathematics educators, a wide range of opportunities for interaction, social media, and technological tools were employed to support communication online. EnCOMPASS community members used digital media (Twitter and blogs), Google Hangouts, electronic email lists, short courses through an online learning platform (Blackboard Learn), and f2f summer workshops (four-day) to engage teachers in taking their students’ mathematical problem solving strategies seriously.

Participants in the EnCOMPASS program were invited to apply as fellows, based on their previous experience with an online math teaching organization, The Math Forum (www.mathforum.org). To date, 31 mathematics teachers from across the US are EnCOMPASS fellows who have attended at least one of two summer workshops in 2013 and 2014. Another 15 teachers have joined the community as new members, enrolling in short courses, or attending the summer workshops as online participants.

Findings;

Through the analysis of digital networks, discourse in blogs and Tweets, discussion boards, and video in online chats, we are beginning to grasp the web of support and cultural norms shared among these teachers and the project staff. By engaging teachers in math problem solving activities and related discussions on their students’ problem solving strategies, teachers learned to engage in a more specialized discourse around “knowing and wondering,” governed by a set of norms in the
mathematics teacher community, thereby establishing a shared culture. Participation in that culture not only fostered knowledge building, it also advanced different mental habits, creating a dynamic community (van Es, 2012). Yet, we could see how this community overlapped with and shared membership with other dynamic online PLCs. Its boundaries were porous and movement between groups was fluid. Our research pushed us to question how to define its borders and to understand the impact of the economic and political realities of teachers’ lives.

Practical implications (if applicable):

As Schlager & Fusco (2003) note, understanding how to nurture and sustain thriving online PLC requires studying structures and practices with a goal of forging stronger relationships among education practitioners. “In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other” (Wenger-Trayner, E. & Wenger-Trayner, B., 2015). Yet, how we gather data toward this end can point to expanding an understanding of the larger cultural context and processes, rather than a simplistic explanation rooted in individualism.

References:


Construction of achievement-related differences in homework situations

Purpose;

Praxeological Education research (Schatzki 1996) shows that academic achievement is a construct that is created in the classroom as a result of social practices and attributions made to the stakeholders. Students are in interactions continuously allocated in diverse levels of performance due to these attributions. This leads to a system of differences which is steadily solidifying (Rabenstein et al. 2013; Kalthoff 2000; Zaborowski, Meier & Breidenstein 2011).

It is known that achievement attributions are influenced significantly by sociocultural differences that prevail between the students (Mehan 2012; Bernstein 2000). In this regard, homework plays an important role as a link between school and the domestic environment as homework is performed outside the classroom and allows the involvement of parents or supervisors. By reintegrating homework into the classroom it is transferred seamlessly into the academic achievement system which may allow social inequality to be transferred directly into the classroom.

For these reasons, our question is whether homework in the classroom particularly generates achievement-related differences and, if yes, how this doing achievement occurs. The results are supposed to offer information on the specific system of differences that is created by homework practices in the classroom.

Design/methodology/approach;

In order to identify the practices which construct academic achievement and solidify inequality we chose an ethnographical access to the classroom with participant observation. We did not observe the making of homework at home, but only the practices in the classroom. The data were obtained in different schools with different teachers in several subjects in grades 5 to 12 to find a wide variety of practices regarded to homework. The participant observation focused on all situations in the classroom related to homework, including homework instruction, homework assignment, homework review and discussion.

Findings;

The ethnographical project is not yet completed. Nevertheless, results are beginning to emerge. It becomes apparent that teachers do not reflexively defuse the diverse supporting mechanisms, which come into use when working on homework in a domestic environment even when these come up directly in class. Academic achievement remains subject to certain attributions even if unequal assistance in regard to homework is expressed explicitly. This leads to the reinforcement of social inequality.

Furthermore, it is shown that teachers feel pressured to integrate assigned homework in the following class even when it is not suited with regards to content or didactically. The students' effort with homework implicates that they are interested in having their homework validated and reviewed by the teacher. In our paper we will show how the resulting pressure on teachers is passed on to the students as a pressure to perform. It demonstrates that
homework effectively produces practices that are related to achievement and therefore produce inequality.

Practical implications (if applicable);

This study could provide arguments for the abolition of homework, which has been discussed lately in Germany in the context of the debate of all-day schools (Dürr & Merk 2013). The first results of the study show that classroom practices related to homework reproduce and even accentuate differences in achievement. The shift of homework into school (homework done under supervision) does not seem to change much in the differences of achievement, since the classroom practices of evaluating achievement during the review of homework have not changed. In this respect, an argument can be made in favor of the abolition of homework.


A COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY OF TEACHER’S EXPERIENCES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN COLOMBIA

The Colombian educational system is structured by levels: early childhood education, primary education, secondary education and university. The current childhood national policy has determined that it is compulsory to have at least one year of early childhood education for children aged 6 years. Responding to this condition, public schools have incorporated into elementary school the level of early childhood education aimed to prepare children for compulsory schooling that involve training in basic academic educational skills required to perform successfully in the current educational system. Traditionally, this childcare was provided by the Colombia Family Welfare Institute (ICBF). The Educational centers called Community Welfare Homes supported by ICBF have changed over the years from a conception of assistance to a conception of education. This process has generated contradictions in programs and actions of traditional Community Welfare Homes confronted with the new educational goals.

As a consequence, there is a tension between the early childhood education provided by the community welfare homes and schools. The early childhood level offered in formal schools has a clear identification with compulsory primary education while the community welfare homes have community emphases. In this paper we want to understand teachers ‘experiences in both Community Welfare Homes and schools, and how children are included in these two different educational contexts. This study evidence that teachers do not simply reproduce the institutional discourses from educational institutions, instead teachers fight against early childhood schooling politics and institutionalization.

Teachers ‘experiences lead us to reflect on the ways in which they include children in the educational context. By analyzing the educational strategies designed and implemented by teachers in their daily routines and the meaning they assigns to these strategies, we established that teachers create new forms of relating with children that resist the hegemonic approaches of early childhood education. Furthermore, by using innovative and situated pedagogical tools, teachers contribute to the configuration of children new subjectivities. Teachers propose situations in which children learn, among other things, to propose initiatives, to carry out projects, to act on their curiosity, imagination and creativity and to get involved in issues of common concern, care and responsibility for themselves and the others (Bertolini, 2011).

Theoretically we draw on literature on early childhood education oriented to development and the way meanings of education are socially constructed (Rogoff 2003, Myers, 2008, Moss, 2008). We will also consider the notions of experience (Bárcena y Mèlich, 2001; Derrida, 1977; Larrosa 2001) and the notion of resistance (Giroux, 1990; Scott, 2000).

About the notion of experience we draw on Bárcena and Mèlich (2001) idea of education as an ethical event that is shaped in a unrepeatable and unique experience between teacher and student. In this relationship it is essential to be open to the others, accept them and commit to them.

"An event that by its very nature is an irruption of the unexpected and extraordinary it is, on the one hand, what make us think; not something about which we think about, but what gives us the opportunity to think what happened with new thinking, new categories and a new language. Secondly, an event is not that upon which we experience, but what the experience
mean to us, because it is something that happens to us and transform us. Finally, an event is what breaks the continuity of our story and of the time we lived." (Bárcena, 2003: 85-86).

Regarding the notion of resistance we hint at the ways early childhood education teachers handle their work within educational institutions, resisting established routines in relation to time, space, activities and materials by proposing strategies more responsive to children’s needs.

The resistance imply teachers a commitments with liberating and emancipatory pedagogies, which correspond to an education for a more equitable, egalitarian and democratic society (Bourdieu, 1993; Freire, 1970, 2001; Giroux, 1990, 1998). This is a pedagogy oriented to social change and a critical learning that takes into account the experiences, narratives and biographies of students while viewing the school times and spaces as places of resistance and possibility.

Methods:

From an ethnographic perspective the study focuses on teachers’ experiences and how children are included in six early childhood educational institutions. The ethnographic fieldwork implied a close engagement during the encounters with teachers. By employing various techniques and strategies that includes participant observation, focus group interviews with teachers and parents, and the analysis of multiple artifacts we were able to engage in different styles of learning and understanding, acquiring discursive and practical knowledge of teacher’s educational experiences. The data was collected in three community welfare homes and three schools to compare teachers ‘experiences between the various forms of childcare provided in Colombia.

Contribution:

The study is expected to derive knowledge about the actions proposed and implemented by educators in early childhood education that facilitate or hinder children learning experiences to build their subjectivities, and to contribute to their development as autonomous, creative and social subjects.

By showing the way teachers resist practices that have been institutionalized in the schooling culture in order to propose more creative and contextualized strategies, the study will also reflect on the way in which early childhood educational institutions oriented by universal goals may be transformed in spaces more responsive to the particularities of their contexts and their children. In the same way, we aim to challenge the idea that initial education relate just with subject contents and plans that regulate times and spaces. Teachers in this study find ways to resist these notions and instead propose strategies that respond to the senses of early childhood education such as playing, exploring the environment, art and literature. In this sense, the intervention of the learning times and spaces respond to the needs and rhythms of children.

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Girls don’t fight! Immigrant boys discussing popular culture with their teacher.

Recently, a number of events in Sweden and elsewhere, have caused a debate on the issue of young immigrant men and the relation to non-immigrant young women, in terms of sexual harassment, gender equity and appropriate behaviour in public places. In connection with this, we, as researchers, returned to the material produced during an 18 months ethnographic study, several years ago. The overall objective of the research project was to study teaching in the subject of Swedish as first language in 5th grade at two compulsory schools with children aged 10-12, in a city centre area. The recurring negotiation of gender and ethnicity in the classroom was the main focus during the fieldwork. Fieldwork was conducted in formal settings, such as lessons, and teacher team meetings and in informal settings, such as the hallways and the school library, the playground and in the neighborhood. Additional data sources consist of schedules, policy documents, artefacts, etc. (Burgess, 1984; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Thomas, 1993).

Since we spent one year and a half in one particular classroom of eleven year olds, the material contains many episodes from classroom talks and dialogues. This presentation focusses mainly on one of the many lessons, where fictional literature, children's books, were read and discussed in so called book talks (Chambers, 1985). In our paper, one particular field note, audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, is scrutinized in detail, as it is highlighting a part of the larger ethnographic enquiry. The theoretical framework used for the analysis leans on gender studies, postcolonial theory, and the hitherto less used concept of aetonormativity.

One particular dialogue between teacher and children is studied in detail in order to throw light on how structures of gender, ethnicity and age come into play as part of an everyday talk about a children's novel. Thus, the talk about an event in the novel, is subsequently transformed into a general talk about gender, behaviour and normativity. The conversation between children and teacher changes as a more principal discussion takes place as to whether girls fight like boys do, or differently and what the arguments are for similarity or difference. Thus, the instructional discourse in order to achieve an enhanced proficiency in reading cannot be separated from but is imbedded in the regulative discourse (Bernstein, 1996).

Only one dialogue is studied and the findings are based on less substantial data. Thus, the value of the analysis is limited although we claim that the consequences of the dialogue and the classroom discourse might be further discussed in light of recent events, regarding gender, ethnicity and violence.

Some practical implications might be to discuss and to show how complex situations might or might not be handled in the classroom, how power is exerted and how power relations might be more complicated than what first becomes obvious.

Some social implications might entail a discussion of how everyday sexism is expressed in the encounter between teacher and boys in the multiethnic classroom. Here, issues of gender, ethnicity and age (maturity) are centered on a minor topic expressed in a children’s book.
References


Children as researchers? Methodological considerations on participation in the context of childhood studies

For researchers who engage in social studies of childhood, ethnography is regarded as an ideal method for approaching children’s perspective. Alison James (2005) even claims that the social study of childhood, has only been made possible through the use of ethnographic approaches. In contrast to traditional ethnographic roles where researchers endeavor to become participants in the site, participatory techniques aimed at including children in the ethnographic process are being highly recommended in childhood studies. Participatory techniques are lauded to have the epistemological advantage to access the perspectives of the children being researched rather than to present the perspective of the adult researcher (see Gallacher & Gallagher 2010, 499). Children are not only considered as competent interpreters of the social world, but also as experts of themselves, whose expertise may no longer be subordinated to the researcher’s perspectives on children’s daily practices. Along with Gallacher and Gallagher (2010), we would like to question some of the taken-for-granted assumptions of contemporary participatory ethnographic approaches in childhood studies including the assumptions of voice and empowerment as necessary outcomes.

As ethnographers, who have a long standing experiences in doing ethnographich research in childhood institutions, we would like to raise critical questions on the advocacy of participatory techniques. We will focus our critique on a) methodological implications of the dominance of relying on participatory techniques for children in ethnographic research, and b) ontological implications on conceptualising childhood and the generational order and power relations between children and adults. Drawing on examples of our own work, we seek to reconceptualise the role of the ethnographic researcher as the person who not only has to co-construct his or her role in the context of the children’s worlds, but who also has to creatively deal with insecurity, falliablity and the feeling of incompetence.
Purpose; Digital technologies open new windows for ethnographic explorations of cultural experiences. In this paper, we examine text messaging among academically talented girls of color at three U.S. urban high schools. Texting introduced a new communication modality into the girls’ lives and created a space for new discourses mediating their participation in school. At each school, distinct texting discourses emerged--with implications for ethnographic studies of discourse and of young people’s commitments to schooling.

Design/methodology/approach; Drawing on theories of discourse (Baron 2008, Fairclough 2003, Gee 2008), text messaging was part of large 3-year ethnographic study of how the idea of pursuing science or technology fit into the context of high-achieving girls’ lives. Sixty-eight girls and their families from three urban high schools in one U.S. city agreed to participate. The study followed the girls from the beginning of grade 10 through grade 12 (2006-2009). All the girls were identified as “high-achieving” in math and science at the end of grade 9.

Multiple methods of data collection were used--participant observations, open-ended interviews, and surveys with girls and family members, and collection of the girls’ BlackBerry messages. Each participant was given a BlackBerry smartphone in mid-2007--at a time when texting began to explode as a medium of communication in the U.S. (Baron 2008, Traugott, Joos, Ling and Qian 2006). For most of the girls, the BlackBerry was their first mobile phone; for all of them, it was their first smartphone. The 68 girls included a majority living in high-poverty households and self-identified as Mexican-American or African-American.

With the girls’ and their parents’ permission, we captured all the text messages they exchanged with each other and the researchers over an 18-month period and saved them to a secure server. Consistent with U.S. human subjects requirements, we explained to the girls and their parents that the BlackBerry messages would be read, saved, and used by researchers. We promised confidentiality except when harm might occur. In preparing for data analysis, we replaced all proper names and other identifiers, and erased all pictures. The BlackBerry messages (104,026 total messages) were analyzed in two ways: quantitatively using a computer program, E-Data Viewer, to count exchanges and follow message threads in their natural order; and qualitatively to identify themes and develop interpretations.

Findings; In this paper, we look specifically at how the girls (1 group at each of 3 schools) used texting to communicate about school. We found that their text messaging was highly social and full of fun. It contained humor, laughter, taboo topics, in-group expressions, puns, teasing, unorthodox spelling and grammar, emoticons, and “reduplicated punctuation” [!!!!] (Thurlow 2014). But texting was not only fun and inventive: Texting also did social and cultural work that mediated the girls’ relationships to school in important ways. For all the girls, texting became a new modality for “doing school.” Further, at each school, the discourse produced in texting was distinct, thus revealing “regional” differences in how texting mediated relationships to school and in the implications for the girls’ future lives.

Implications; While teen texting is frequently trivialized, especially with respect to schooling, we found the girls’ texting discourse to be an important indicator of their relationship to school. Texting created a new space in which, at each school, it became easier to communicate about some things than others. For example, at one school, girls texted almost constantly about the gratuitous workload of classes, and they rarely said anything positive about their school experience. At another school, they texted mostly about school assignments and
helped each other with homework problems. At the third, texting was used for play among peers. We argue that texting discourse, once established, affected the “game” of schooling by intensifying particular local stances toward schooling and obscuring or crowding out others. Access to text messages offered a glimpse of the girls’ experiences not usually available to ethnographers, and the findings, together with those from the larger ethnography, helped to clarify connections between school social organization, classroom interactions, and student outcomes.
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Preschool teacher professionalism and education reform: An ethnographic analysis of the responses, consequences and implications of a recent education reform in Sweden

Purpose
Recently European education systems have undergone similar major reforms (Beach, 2010) with similar consequences for teachers and teacher-professionalism (Beach, 2008) and ethnography was identified early as an important research tool for examining these changes (e.g. Ball, 1994). The dialectics of local and global processes (Arnove, 2013), the institutionalisation of international influence (Samoff, 2003) and the tensions of centralisation and decentralisation (Bray, 2013) have all been given attention. The present paper is written in relation to each of them.

The paper has been composed within a research project about education reform processes in the Swedish preschool sector following the 2010 revision of the National School Law (SFS 2010: 800) and the introduction of a new preschool curriculum (Skolverket, 2010) that together outlined an expanded range of professional responsibilities. The paper deals with questions about what happened when this change was interpreted and implemented at the local preschool level in different preschools. Its purpose is to demonstrate something of how the education reforms have been interpreted and enacted. Has the space for professional autonomy been widened, how is this visible in practice, what are the implications of this. The analysis has been informed primarily by education sociological theory (Bernstein, 1995, 2000, 2003) and professions theory (Abbott, 2010; Freidson, 2001, Svensson, 2011).

Design/methodology/approach
Data have been produced through ethnographic participant observation, field conversations, and interviews with preschool staff at four preschools in four different Swedish municipalities. Between four and six months of researcher time was spent at each preschool. Two researchers were involved, one at each of two sites. The daily professional activities of four preschool teams were closely followed in all aspects of their professional activities and intra- and inter-group correspondence and communication. National policy documents have also been scrutinized, as have those that have been developed locally, and field conversations and interviews have been conducted with the heads of the preschools, preschool teachers and child-care workers. This broad register of data production is broadly consistent with descriptions of ethnographic methods in education (Walford, 2008) and policy ethnography (Jeffrey et al, 2006). The use of theory in interpretation has been informed by Willis (2000) and Willis and Trondman (2000).

Findings
The preliminary analysis suggests that the policy discourse about preschool teacher responsibilities has been recognised and is talked about as influential on practices. In some sites it is said to have been active in the transformation of everyday working relations and activities, and there is also some observational evidence of this. Differences in the changes across the sites in terms of enhanced autonomy and responsibility were also found, with implications of developments for an emergent professional identity. The occurrences of continuity and comparability of development across sites will be considered, as will the effects of locally significance contingent circumstances on reform processes.

Research limitations/implications
The research has allowed us to identify new developments and continuities of practice across a number of different sites, responding therefore to the call to broaden ethnographic work and its analytical outcomes and generalization possibilities. New conceptualisations of professionalism have
emerged at both the local government and individual preschool levels. Local governments have chosen different strategies for policy revisions which in turn has affected how the preschool staff talk about and develop preschool teacher professional responsibilities and preschool teacher professionalism.

Practical implications
We anticipate being able to make contributions to knowledge about the internecine characteristics of policy negotiation and enactment and the development of professional identity and professionalization at the current global moment.

Social implications
Preschool education is internationally highlighted as very important in the development of the skills and competences for an effective knowledge economy and knowledge societies. The development of professional autonomy and status is important in relation to such developments. Although we are not specifically researching the effects of preschool involvement on knowledge skills we are looking at some of the dynamics involved in the emergence of professionalism in terms of the recognition of higher education and the space given to vertically and/or horizontally developed and communicated knowledge in curriculum activities and everyday edu-care practices.
Ethnography methods with children

Purpose

This paper focuses on the challenges of doing ethnographic research with children. For this purpose, the paper outlines the field work carried out in a German all day school about the integration of scholars with migrant background.

The study was conducted in a primary all day school with children from second and third class. However, the target group was not only composed of scholars, but also of other actors, such as parents, teachers and other school staff. Working with adults and children together, I realized that some methods that were useful to gather information from adults didn’t work as well with children. That is why during the study some ethnographical methods were adapted to be able to better understand the children’s perspectives (Cappello, 2005). For example, while teachers spoke during the interviews about a case of mobbing between scholars, this topic was not mentioned by the children. This example was one of the topics, that led me to modify some of the methods used in order to gather more information from scholars and to get to know their point of view. That is why this paper will present the challenges experienced by working with children, as well as the methods and strategies used during this research.

Methodology

The research was carried out with ethnographical methods: participant observation, spontaneous dialogues, interviews, life stories, photos, drawings and analysis of documents.

Einarsdóttir (2007) defends the advantages of group interviews with children, thus they are used to be together in a group; that is why during the field work a group interview was carried out. The group interview was divided into three phases, with a similar methodology: First, closed-ended questions were made, so that every scholar could give his or her opinion about it. Afterwards a discussion took place about the topic. In order to keep the scholars’ attention during the group interview and encourage them to actively participate some “games” were included. Scholars, for example, should place themselves along a rope with smileys (a happy one, a neutral one and a sad one) indicating their opinion about the question made or voting with a “smiley card” (again three possibilities: happy, neutral or sad). The third and last phase of the group interview was an exercise, that allowed the children to give their opinion anonymously. Afterwards an open discussion was held about the results.

Regarding the individual interviews with scholars, these were carried out with help of drawings. In a first step children described several drawings that represented situations in the school and in a second step the researcher asked questions about the situation described by the individual child. The first interpretation and description of the drawings allowed to lead the conversation to the particular case of the school and the personal situation of the scholar, making them more perceptive and talkative about these subjects.

Additional aspects such as the use of rewards when working with children (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988) or the role of the adult researcher were also analyzed and are a part of the study.

Findings

The German all day school happened to be an exceptional place to do ethnographic research with children, thanks to its less formal character than traditional schools. Taking into
consideration the remarks of Cappello (2005) who affirms that when working with children we need to use methods appropriate to them, the methodology used during this field research was adapted, so that we could get more relevant information from the respondents.

Thanks to the drawings we could collect more precise information about conflicts and problems, about which children would not want to speak before, even during informal conversations or while playing. In the same vein, including games in the group interview encouraged scholars to actively and lively participate.

References


Sally Campbell Galman, University of Massachusetts

‘Improper’ children, pregnant boys and good magic: Gender and power in preschool dramatic and popular play

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to explore how children created and enacted gendered roles in dramatic play settings, including free play as well as more structured ‘dramatime stories’ (Paley, 2004). This paper examines how power is exercised in both types of dramatic play, and how children take on, disrupt and resist the prescribed gender roles put forward by popular culture narratives and the kinderculture writ large. The appearance of alternative roles and disruptive games appear as both a function of children’s practices of cultural production as well as teachers’ intervention, or lack thereof. The paper concludes with a discussion of the methodological concerns around studying children’s play narratives and the importance of protected unstructured dramatic play periods in early childhood settings.

Design/methodology/approach;

The analyses presented in this paper are from the first three years (2012-2015) of an ongoing ethnographic project at a diverse, rural preschool in the Northeastern United States. The data were collected primarily though participant observation during each morning’s free play period, approximately four hours per week for an overall total of approximately 500 hours of observation at the site during that time period. I locate my approach in the interpretive tradition of the ethnography of childhood (D’Amato 1988; Leavitt 1994) that positions children’s culture and childhood as ‘an independent place with its own folklore, rituals, rules and normative constraints . . . within a system that is unfamiliar to [adults] and therefore to be revealed through research’ (James, Jenks and Prout 1998/2012, 29). As James and colleagues describe, this orientation toward children and their culture(s) can affirm children’s agency, intentionality and ‘provide the tribes of childhood . . . with the status of social worlds’ ensuring ‘that such a form of childlife can begin to receive detailed annotation’ (29-30). The paper includes discussion of researcher role strategies such as Mandell’s (1988) ‘least adult’ configuration, adopted with modifications for this study, and the associated problems for the preschool ethnographer.

Findings;

The games and roles created as part of the unstructured dramatic play both introduced what teachers considered problematic tropes from the kinderculture, as well as challenged many of these by expanding play roles and possibilities through nonsense games, like the ‘pregnant boys’. These games, while challenging to teachers, in fact expanded the availability and dimensions of gendered roles available for all pre-schoolers. Meanwhile, the play narratives created in the ‘dramatime story’ exercises were less dialogic, but also less subject to teacher intervention when ‘improper’ (Jones, Holmes, MacRae & MacLure, 2010) pop culture themes came to the fore. Findings support children’s agentive, active interpretation and re-interpretation of even the most problematic popular culture themes and promote the value of unstructured dramatic play. Further, findings support Dyson’s (1995) and Corsaro’s (2003) assertions that children do not mindlessly reproduce pop/kinderculture themes, but rather agentively and purposefully curate these narratives for productive play.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);
As noted above, the problem of researcher role in preschool ethnography has not been sufficiently addressed, though Mandell’s strategy of occupying the position of “least adult” may be the most practical. However, the question of the realities of adult responsibility, even for the researcher, is unresolved by this and other models of gendered roles. As circumstances in this study context reveal, there are times and conditions under which the researcher must choose intervention over the ethnographic identity. That this issue was unresolved remains a point of debate, and a study limitation.

Implications:

Considering that the modern version of Bettelheim’s (1972) problematic but necessary fairy tale may arguably be the ‘banal, superfluous, distasteful and plebeian’ (Henward, 2015, p 377) popular children’s media, banished from many preschool settings, teachers and others who work with and care for children should reflect critically upon the adultist norms implicit in the censorial impulse. By limiting children’s play in these ways, teachers ultimately limit the play palette to conform with their own cherubic, middle class childhood ideal, to the detriment of the real children in their midst.


Henward, A. 2015. “‘She don’t know I got it. You ain’t gonna tell her, are you?’ Popular Culture as Resistance in American Preschools.” Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 46 (3), 208-223.


Counter-migration and (re)incorporation to Mexican society: Ideologies of children returnees to Mexican schools and their parents

Purpose

The absence of immigration reform in the United States is generating a return migration phenomenon in many sending communities across Latin America and the world (Hammond 1999; Masferrer, Passel & Pederzini 2012; Tsuda 2009). With the signing and implementation of the Patriot Act in 2001, greater numbers of immigrants voluntarily return or are forced to return to their country of origin. Mexico’s proximity to the United States suggests Mexican transmigration and counter-migration are likely higher than with other Latin American countries. Given these high levels of counter-migration, re-incorporation of co-nationals to their communities of origins increases in interest and need. This is especially the case with the (re)incorporation of children returnees to the Mexican school system (Sánchez & Zúñiga 2010; Zúñiga & Hamann 2008). For many of these children this is their first schooling experience in Mexico with no prior understanding or command of the Spanish language. For others, it is a re-incorporation to an environment now foreign to them (Hamann, Zuñiga & Sánchez García 2006). Although a few studies exist that examine the (re)incorporation of returnee children to Mexican public schools, they are primarily large-scale studies and quantitative in nature (Hamann, Zuñiga & Sánchez García 2010). This study fills this gap through an in-depth ethnographic analysis of returnee children’s and their parents’ understanding of their (re)integration into their Mexican public school classrooms.

Research Design

I utilized a critical ethnographic approach to examine the cultural dynamics of migration, student/parent ideologies and schooling (Carspecken 1996; Fairclough 2010; Madison 2005; Wodak & Meyer 2009). Data was collected from students, teachers and parents through the use of participant-observation; semi-structured interviews; photovoice; and a discursive analysis of school textbooks and curriculum (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). Students used photography to narrate their ideas and views on their return migration and transition to their new environments, especially school. The study addresses the following questions: What ideologies inform returnee families’, and children in particular, (re)incorporation to their native community in Mexico? How are returnee children who received most of their schooling in the United States incorporated into Mexican schools? and What curricular and cultural modifications do teachers make to address the specific needs of this student population?

Findings

Initial findings suggest students hold transborder and flexible ideologies of belonging that in many instances go counter to both the Mexican and U.S. nation-state (Zúñiga, Hamann, & Sánchez García 2008). In students’ interviews and photovoice projects they revealed a genuine sense of belonging and shared citizenship with both places and spaces. While their parents were more likely to discuss the barriers that students encounter in both the U.S. and Mexican schools, students expressed the positive, but differing experiences of living in two places. When asked what facilitated or made more difficult their incorporation into either country, language differences were the most common response. While ample research exists
about linguistic differences that exist in the United States about immigrant Mexican students
that suggest this is the biggest barrier students must clear, it was surprising to hear students
and parents make the same case for their incorporation into Mexican society (Hamann,
Zuñiga & Sánchez García 2010). Students full command of the Spanish language and
knowledge of the history of Mexico were by far the most difficult issues to overcome.

Teachers and the History curriculum [just to name one], on the other hand, had very definite
and narrow views of citizenship and belonging. Many teachers, for instance, defined “Mexican”
students as those born in Mexico and who were fluent Spanish speakers even though returnee
students were clearly of Mexican descent. Students’ transborder and transnational identities
were many times invisible to the school unless issues of language were at the forefront.

Practical Implications

The education component and analysis of the curriculum has applicability to receiving
communities in Mexico and the United States where returnee or immigrant students are
(re)incorporated into schools regularly. Research findings include recommendations to both
school systems on practical ways of easing the (re)incorporation of students, especially in the
areas of language acquisition, making historical connections across countries, and attending
to issues of citizenship and equity.
The growing Hispanic population in the United States has dramatically transformed student demographics within the public education system. Over the past two decades, the largest percentage of racial integration in the United States includes Black and Hispanic integration, while the smallest increase has been in White and Hispanic integration (Orfield, 2003). Hispanic school children have a greater likelihood of interacting with Black school children than they do with White school children due to racial segregation (Fairlie, 2012).

This paper presents a rich ethnographic study over five years of a majority minority school district located in a predominantly Black suburb outside of Chicago that is now becoming predominantly Hispanic. The research study initially examined the complex, multi-layered sociolinguistic and sociocultural world of Black and Hispanic adolescents in three schools in which the demographics shifted the most, specifically, the study examined the contact zones in which the Black and Hispanic youth socialize. However, over time, the study moved to examine the racial, cultural and linguistic dynamics within the broader school community and addressed topics such as violence and crime and power and politics. Our data include extensive interviews with students, teachers, parents, community members and other administrators; field observation data in classrooms and schools; and document analysis from formal and informal school meetings in district meetings and village meetings.

Conclusions from the study support earlier research on the linguistic dexterity, language crossing, and language sharing of Black-Brown youth in majority minority school communities (Paris, 2012). The tri-racial geography of the school setting led some social actors to display behaviors and actions that were hybrid in nature, and therefore, a third space was created within the school in which students from both racial groups came together in unison. Some of the Black students displayed cultural competency by stating openly their desire to learn Spanish and to even
use the Spanish they knew in front of their Hispanic peers, by creating a tight social network of friends in which there was a racial balance, by dating outside of their race, etc. Therefore, the cultural straddlers anchored themselves in the Hispanic community but also developed strategies to subvert themselves from being excluded entirely from the greater Black majority. In some ways, they moved beyond the *double consciousness* and *double voicing* of Black students navigating a White-Black landscape and found themselves instead in a trivariate of sorts navigating between Standard English, the Black dialect and Spanish (Kinloch, 2010).

The Hispanic cultural straddlers displayed their cultural competency around hip-hop culture, the Black dialect and challenging normative notions of hair and skin color. Yet, they did not identify with the Black culture for the sake of identity politics, unlike South Asians who may identify with the Black minority in America due to a political identity aligned with combating racism (Sharma, 2010). The Hispanic students also did not identify with Black culture for the sake of increasing one’s masculinity or for becoming fascinated by the exotic Other, unlike White males who consume Black culture as a form of social capital (Rose, 1994). Rather, Hispanic students both challenged and reinforced notions of difference and division between and amongst their Black peers—*los morenos*—by becoming both a part of but also apart from Black America.
“Pupils with background” as a public action category. An ethnography of professional uses in French upper secondary education

Purpose; Although it has claimed to be “indifferent to differences” (Bourdieu 1966) in order to protect the equality of opportunities for all pupils, the French education system is academically (and socially) unequal and faintly cohesive (Dubet, Duru-Bellat, et Vérotout 2010). It seeks as a priority the transmission of knowledge rather than the expression of pupils’ subjectivities and the construction of relationships of proximity between adults and youngsters.

However, in the context of a decline of the values of universalism and rationality that used to structure the upper secondary school system, and of a growing requirement to personalise public services and counter early school leaving, upper secondary schools are increasingly asked to take into account pupils as “whole persons”. Treating pupils as individuals implies to consider their personal history, identity and subjectivity, beyond the social role of pupil which is strictly academic. But how do upper secondary school professionals manage to treat pupils as individuals? Who are the pupils looked at as such and why? To what extent does it contribute to reshape the institution?

In this presentation, I propose a reflection on a particular category of pupils called “pupils with background” by some upper secondary school professionals. “Background” is a euphemised way to refer to difficult lived experiences (social, familial, biographical and academic) that professionals interpret as impediments for academic success and/or as explanations for anti-academic behaviours. This presentation aims to analyse both the construction of the category and the treatment of the labelled pupils in a French upper secondary school. I will discuss the ways in which the treatment of those labelled pupils involves an emotional labour that seeks to shift pupils’ relationship to the education system.

Design/methodology/approach; This presentation is grounded on part of the data collected in my PhD research in political science. The presentation draws on a five months discontinue observation in a French upper secondary school (mainly shadowing the school life staff, (Wolcott 2003)) and narrative interviews with the staff (teachers, administration staff, school life staff, cleaning staff. N=35).

Findings; Generally engaged in academic failure trajectories (within dominated academic streams), those pupils challenge a system that kept excluding and humiliating them. In reaction to that, professionals either keep excluding them, or intend to understand them better (investing their personal “background”) and to build a positive relationship with them. By doing so, they tend to temporarily reduce the symbolic violence of the school system (Bourdieu et Passeron 1970) upon those particular pupils.

Nevertheless, I will show how this specific labour on pupils’ emotions seeks to contribute to conforming them to a more conventional pupil role (lowering anti-academic behaviours for instance), that is, to more “reasonable” (socially acceptable) behaviours.

Besides, this labour must be scrutinised through the prism of organisational behaviours: caring for “pupils with background” can be seen as a way for professionals to prevent a negative impact on the “school climate”. Generating a positive school climate can form a useful advantage in the context of local competition between schools to recruit pupils.


Dr Yvonne Hill, Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln

Doing, undoing and redoing: a feminist ethnography of mentoring trainee teachers

Design/methodology/approach;

This paper presents a five year ethnographic project charting the interactions between one mentor and ten trainee teachers during the school placement phase of initial teacher education in England. The study adopted a feminist approach to examine the effects of ‘professional’ discourse in framing teaching as a masculinist cultural project within schools. By adopting a case study approach to the teaching of Advanced Level Sociology, the research examines the potential for maintaining a feminist critical pedagogy in teaching social science and questions the propensity for teachers’ critical engagement with the state.

Findings;

The findings of the study explicated the developing relationship between the mentor and trainee teachers; it interrogated assumptions around ‘professionalism’ and questioned emerging forms of reactive and active configurations of being and becoming a teacher in England. The initial study examined the cumulative effects of cultural text in constituting a discourse around teachers and teaching by taking a view of the ways in which TV recruitment advertisements, codes of values and professional standards affect the people at the centre of education as a cultural project. This paper represents a retrospective view of teacher development at the beginning of the twenty-first century and signposts current work being proposed to chart developments over the past fifteen years.

Research limitations/implications;

The limitations of the work may be seen in the auto/ethnographic approach with a microscopic focus on one teacher and her interaction with a series of (ten) trainee teachers. As part of a professional doctorate in education, the study argues that the positioning of the author allows an intimate ‘insider view’ of teacher identity and teacher practice that explicates an alternative conceptual framework from a feminist perspective. The implications of ethnographies that account for teachers’ subject knowledge, autobiography, emotive social relationships and importantly how they critically position themselves within the neoliberal state are significant because it explains how teachers make meaning within their personal and professional context.

The landscape for initial teacher education has changed profoundly in the past five years and this paper traces the inception of the new public management of teacher ‘professionalism’ and the manipulation of teachers’ identity through discourse. The discourse has shifted its focus away from the professionalism of teachers and teaching to the learning agenda with a drive to establish what constitutes learning, standards, targets and student progress.

Practical implications;

The practical implications for considering the doing, undoing and redoing of teacher identity is in bringing different frames of analysis for understanding everyday life in schools. The teacher education process in England and the interaction between mentor and trainee allows teachers in the local and international context to recognise the mechanism of the neoliberal state in shaping teachers’ compliance and resistance through ‘principled infidelity’ in resisting education as an audited masculinist project.
Social implications;

The social implications of this paper are to offer alternative conceptual frameworks for examining the ways that teachers' identities are framed by the discourse of the neoliberal state. It contributes an ethnographic feminist perspective to counter much of the malestream literature that fails to account for gendered identities being generated through the interface of personal values and the prescribed ‘professional’ discourse in the English education system.
Purpose;

The paper seeks to advance theoretical understandings of the impact of space upon identity by exploring current and previous student experiences inside one educational system (an elite UK higher education institution (HEI)). Space is understood in both locational and an analytic sense – as encounters that constitute navigational moments (Gale and Parker) and fields (Bourdieu). This approach is applied to student transition and identity formation at university. A case is made that both models (navigational moments and field) neglect the potency of agency and space.

Design/methodology/approach;

The data consists of a dozen interviews, with alumni all with unusual backgrounds or who were the first in their families to go to university. These are situated and understood within an institutional ethnography (IE), after Burgess’ (1984:15) notion of ‘macro level ethnographies’ moreso than Smith’s IE (2005). The paper therefore situates the HEI ‘beyond the school gates’ and within its regional, global and historical contexts, specifically within its rapid expansion in the post-war period.

The analysis situates actors within this, but attends to their (a) definitions of the situation (Thomas/ Goffman) and (b) student career pathways (doxa or topology, after Bourdieu and Lury). The types of student discussed in the paper reach across graduates from the 1960s to the 2000s and across subject matters. Observations relates to a variety of college spatial environments.

Findings;

In this paper, both space (the co-location ‘encounter’) and its interpretative possibilities is stressed (for both crediting and discarding identity performances). All interviewees discuss making sense of encountering ‘misrecognition’, but also its recognition and all graduated successfully (with one exception). Many are now successful academics. The paper also further stresses the ‘future’ interpretative work in-progress and examines the disruptive potential of encounters for those acquiring (but who previously lacked) doxa/ topological maps. Doxa is Bourdieu’s notion of the dominant definition of the situation. In educational contexts, this has been read as the misrecognition of class inequalities in operation (James 2015). Expressly, this pursues the aesthetic possibilities of space for generating equality (Dikeç 2015, Gale and Parker 2015) in this one, educational domain. What transitions in identity take place and what are most effective for students acquiring the ability to cross fields/ conceptualise reasonable possibilities? How does space contrain or enable this?

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

There are temporal limitations to the dataset, in the sense that it captures period of time from the 1960s to the 2000 and via retrospective interviews and photo elicitation/ documentary analysis. To counter this, the institution is situated within its present-day configuration and circumstances.

Practical implications (if applicable);
In the UK context, the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) imposes expectations of WP upon HEIs and increasingly attention has been placed upon pre-HEI application. However, this paper follows the negative or deviant case (Strong 1988) and, too, Gale and Parker’s (2015) lead to look at how cohorts anticipated their future possibilities and desires. From Dikeç (2015) the paper also adds a focus upon how space and how the neglected situation involves identity formation – namely encounters with misrecognition.

Social implications (if applicable);

Aspiration, misrecognition and inequalities of access to Higher Education have all been discussed in terms of various capitals, of economics, politics and culture. This paper seeks to add space as both location and its analytical value for understanding what are, ultimately, the segregating processes of global capitalism.
Yuki Imoto

Revisiting International Preschools in Japan: reflections on the evolvement of the self and the field in ethnographic research

Purpose;

The aim of this paper is to reflect on the changing nature of the field of the “international preschool”. I conducted anthropological fieldwork as a preschool assistant in Tokyo in 2007 (see Imoto 2011), but now find myself returning to the field in 2016 – with a growing interest in “re-inscribing”. I reflect on how the interpretation and analysis of the field has changed in relation to the changing status and perspectives of the researcher, as well as in relation to the changing socio-economic context of Japanese education.

Design/methodology/approach;

Since submitting my doctoral thesis on “International Preschools in Japan: A Study of the Organization of Diversity”, 7 years have passed. In those years, my approach to ethnographic research has evolved to incorporate a more sensitized awareness of my own subjectivities in the process of constructing an ethnographic text. The felt need to weave in more of “my own stories” into the text is the starting point for this paper. The paper thus incorporates an autoethnographic approach, as well as making reference to (and adding another comparative perspective to) Tobin et. al’s 2009 work that considers the extent to which globalizing forces are affecting institutions of socialization at the local levels.

Findings;

1. The meaning of international preschool education

In 2009, I argued that certain high-income Japanese parents in Tokyo send their children to international preschools to consume its aura of “internationalism” and to fulfill their wish of providing native-like English language skills for their child—but that the strong pressures to receive a “compulsory education” in the Japanese system and to retain their Japanese language ability meant that after the preschool level, most would opt for the “Japanese” rather than the “international” route.

In 2016, changes to this trend can be observed. There is a growing acceptance of Japanese international school children (i.e. children who attend international schools even after the preschool level) in Japan; much of it is due to the setting up of new entrance quotas for such children in private junior and senior high schools as well as universities. There is a convergence of the schools’ needs to keep up student numbers against the backdrop of a declining youth population, and the rising neoliberal discourse of “gurobaru jinzai (global human resources)”

Preschools are accordingly expanding their roles and meanings – providing “homework support” services for international school children, as well as afterschool English classes for the local Japanese school children.

2. My changing perspectives and relation to the field

It is likely that being based in the UK as a student led me to gain a stronger sense of Japanese identity, and affected my critical portrayal of the international preschool when writing my doctorate thesis. Now based in Japan, I have more awareness in positively highlighting my in-betweenness and hybridity – and of those I encountered in the field. Rather than critique and
analyse, I find myself asking, how can I collaborate, and how can I redefine – both myself and the field?

Reflecting on why I started this research in the first place, I see how much it relates to my quest to make sense of my own early childhood education, and my relationship with my mother. The “international preschool” in Japan was in fact not a “native” field for a native anthropologist, but was foreign and counterintuitive to my own values of preschool and early childhood language education. The intra-cultural comparative lens - of a Japanese female raised in a middle class family that holds a strong identity based on “Japanese” private schooling – remained unexplored. Now, however, I take a more critical and distanced perspective on the cultural structures and class ideals that I had been socialized into. I feel the necessity of re-inscribing this culture of Japanese private schooling that distinctly defines the class identity of a minority of the Japanese middle class (including my family members) into the ethnographic narrative and analysis of its counterpart – the international preschool.
Bob Jeffrey, Exeter University

The significance of informal and formal learning and other related factors to the survival of the village pub

Purpose/aim(s):

Pubs are generally under threat as up to 3 pubs are closing per week nationally and for the rural village pubs the closure of their one and only pub can be a significant loss to community activity. However, the village pub still has a role to play in acting as a place for social interaction across classes, enriching social life with a mix of events, promoting charities and in some cases hosting local public services such as a shop and post office. Some would also argue that they have a cultural value representing something authentic and traditional in the face of powerful commercial pressures towards standardisation and cloned pubs. They are also in many cases community hubs, offering a space where local people can meet and socialise: as one of our interviewees described it, ‘a place where a community can bounce off itself’. They are perceived by the public to be an important place where people from different backgrounds can meet and interact. They also provide a safe environment for young people who behave better in rural areas because they are known locally and they mimic their elders. They also feel safer and have a strong sense of place.

We will focus on lives of those who own and manage these pubs: their values; connections to their customers and the communities; the coping strategies they use to manage difficult times and the influence of the role of pub manager on their family and personal life. In particular we will investigate the nature of informal learning that takes place in a pub environment for those managing them and also between customers and in particular how the pub can be seen as a resource for the local community to find artisans, artists, mechanics, academics, designers and the role of the pub in developing projects in the community or more distanced environments. In addition we are interested in any more formal educational aspects with which the pub engages. We are also interested, in particular, with the perspectives of women in this field as we believe these may well have been overlooked in recent years.

Methods:

Methods

We will use ethnographic methods taking place over at least a year. Ethnographic methods include the collection of:

- regular recorded conversations with owners/managers of the village pubs and with other relevant persons connected to the pub including customers if appropriate
- fieldnotes written by the researcher documenting the life of the pub and its events and using these as data for further conversations with the relevant people and in descriptive accounts of the life of the pub.
- documents relating to the life of the pub including photographs

This ethnographic research will take took cognisance of the structural influences in situations and the dilemmas, tensions and constraints under which pub managers work and the way they manage and cope with their situations. To understand the complexities of what is happening we need to employ a qualitative approach, which ‘captures and records the voices of lived experience…contextualises experience…goes beyond mere fact and surface
appearances…presents details, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another’ (Denzin, 1989, p. 83).

**Findings:**

None Yet

**Research Limitations/Implications**

I socialise at one of the pubs and sometimes at the others so familiarity is an issue. It is assumed that all publications will be available to participants so ethical issues involved. Initially single descriptions of each of the pubs will be forwarded to county CAMRA magazine for consideration and possibly to the national CAMRA newspaper. These descriptions relating to the pubs’ attempts to maintain their existence in the local community and any relevant aspects of the pub life will be available to the pub managers prior to publication and any relevant person identified in the articles. Other possible outlets include local magazines but this is not the main focus for publication. More academic articles using the combined data from the pubs will initially be included in an annual ethnography conference in September 2015 and in time they will be submitted to relevant academic journals. In the long term a book may be produced incorporating all the analysis of the research carried out and attempts will be made to anonymise the pubs.

**Practical Limitations**

Ditto

**Social Implications**

Participants may well recognise other’s contributions so more ethical considerations and my personal relations may be damaged.

Some reference to all the implications may be made in the paper.
Danijela Jerotijevic

Cultural capital and academic success.

Purpose;

The paper is based on the ethnographic field research provided in central Serbia in 2014 and 2015. This research was part of a broader project focused on comparison of educational practices in three cultural environments – Serbia, Bosnia and Slovakia. Author will present findings from her own research, however, in context of the project. The basic presumption is that academic success of children is highly influenced by family background and its socio-economic status. The aim was to verify if the culture – specific educative practices used in the families with different level of cultural capital would be reflected in children’s academic success and eventually, in their future ambitions.

The cultural capital was operationalized according to the achieved education of parents, ownership of books and other cultural artefacts and according to the attendance of cultural events (Bourdieu, 1986). Educational practices were studied ethnographically in the family homes.

It is not a new finding that pupils from the lower social class are often less successful in the school. Some sociologists consider schools to be institutions directly enabling the reproduction of social inequalities based on selection. Those students, whose parents intensively co-operate with the school, meet the teachers’ wishes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Practices used by those parents call Bourdieu and Passeron „pedagogic action“ and the long-life habit of their exercitation is, according to them, the part of parents’ cultural capital. Children from these families are considered to be „talented“ pupils and they are often favored by teachers. During the schooling, their position is further improved. We may observe here the strong influence of parental education: Parents with higher education usually work with their pedagogic action in accordance with school. On the other hand, working class parents often influence their children in the opposite way (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Except this theoretical expectation, author also reflected the specific situation in which children (families) that were part of the research, have been living. Children were between 10 and 15 years old, therefore their parents were growing up and later established families during the nineties, when Serbia was involved in three war conflicts. Social and economic situation in Serbia is still far from stable and many, especially young people, are leaving the country. How this instability and insecure social values influence parents – children relationships and messages that parents are sending to their children (concerning value of the education and other important questions)? In my presentations I will try to answer those questions.

Design/methodology/approach;

The research was based on qualitative methods: in-depth interviews with family members (both children and parents) and observing family relations and daily life in their homes. The questions about parents’ background, their academic success, family life, finished education, practices for preparing for the school etc. were asked. Children were interviewed without parents being present and they were asked about their school achievements, hobbies, friends, peer interests, time spent with parents and significant others etc.

Findings;
Data are still in the process of analysis.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

Idea behind the project was to combine qualitative and quantitate methods (different kind of test for children executive functions and their reading comprehension, however, only qualitative data were collected.

Practical implications (if applicable);  

Social implications (if applicable);  

The presentations will try to explain how social and political context of living environment may influence and / or change parents ideas about education and also children preferences.

References:


Malene Kjær, Aalborg University

Ethnographic nexus analysis in clinical nursing education

Purpose;

Internationally, student nurses' attrition after clinical practice is an increasing problem (Hamshire, Willgoss, & Wibberley, 2012; Pilegård Jensen, 2006). A better understanding of 'becoming a nurse' as situated practice in the hospital wards might help avoid pitfalls in the clinical practice. Thus a thorough insight into the field is necessary in order to change it. The purpose of this paper is to show and discuss how it is possible methodologically to do ethnographic research in clinical education and how the field of clinical nursing education in the hospital wards might be improved after insights obtained through ethnographic research.

Design/methodology/approach;

Using nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, 2007) as an ethnographic framework in four Danish hospital wards, a study of the development of a professional identity among student nurses in Denmark was conducted. Scollon and Scollon’s notions on 'navigate' and 'engage' in the field provided a frame to combine both discourse (Edley, 2014) document (Prior, 2003) and interaction analysis (Jordan & Henderson, 1995) in order to grasp the crucial social actors (nurses, students, patients, relatives) and their daily routinized practice in the health care settings.

Findings;

The paper contributes with insights into the field of clinical nursing education, gained through a thorough methodological framework of nexus analysis as an ethnographic way to conduct research in education and grasp the various multimodal social actions that constitute the practice. The paper shows how a combination of (video) observations, written interviews and workshops can be a way to obtain knowledge about the practice that consists of members generalizations, neutral observations, individual experiences and interaction with members (Scollon & Scollon 2004, p. 158)

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

Gaining acces to hospital wards to conduct ethographic research (particularly with a video camera) can difficult to obtain. Thorough ethical considerations are essential as well as the build of trust among researcher and the participants in the field, both health care professionals and patients. In the paper these ethical implications (that are also both practical and social) will be discussed and shown as an example of how to be able to conduct ethnograpic research in a clinical learning environment.


Educational Aspirations in Residential Care – An Ethnographic Research Project

Purpose;

The general increase of ethnographic research concerning educational fields of action has less appeal in the area of residential care as it has, for example, in the outpatient practice of child and youth services or in schools. Nevertheless, residential care is also become a field for ethnographic research – with a broad range of issues.

We will present a research project that adds the issue of the role of school education in the everyday life of residential care to the issues of current ethnographic research on residential care. The project draws on the finding that young people who grow up in residential care (homes) achieve lower academic performance and lower secondary school qualifications than their contemporaries. The disadvantaging of young people in residential care with respect to formal education is currently becoming clear based on care leaver research. In residential care practice, directly coping with everyday life, which includes the young people’s daily school attendance, has priority over the issue of the indirect educational success. Even beyond ethnographic research, that one of the overlooked task of residential care research is the relationship between school and residential care. The role of young people as pupils and the associated issue of how residential care, as public organisation, assumes the reproductive function for the school, in particular, shown to be a gap.

The research question is: How do residential care organisations develop cultural capital, and what educational aspirations are expected in this respect? The project confronts the field of residential care with basic approaches of educational inequality. It therefore especially requires an ethnographic practice that works on and with theories. These theories must be considered with regard to practice as foreign to the field or as unusual for the field. Residential care is examined as educational environment and the expression of educational aspiration is looked into. In addition to the general "school-related" activities, special attention is given to the transition from elementary school to secondary school.

Design/methodology/approach;

In terms of methodology, the project "Residential Care and School" is conducted as a six-month ethnography in a living group. In that group, the day-to-day occupation with the subject "school" is observed. The participant observation is supplemented by an interview with experts, several ad hoc interviews and a final group discussion with the youth and child care workers of the group. The ethnography is analysed on the basis of the grounded theory (Strauss/Corbin), whereas the group discussion is analysed by means of the documentary method (Bohnsack).

Findings;

The analyses show that "school", within the context of the fact that the recipients are also pupils, is always part of the daily life in residential care and setting-specific frameworks. The occupation with "school" occurs on different levels – to be mentioned here are for the first time the day-to-day internal and external communications about school, doing homework or decisions concerning the transition to other schools. In addition, the different ways in which the family of origin is involved in the context of school education can be portrayed.
Out-of-school educational factors also enter into the setting of the residential care on a day-to-day basis and thus create additional educational possibilities. In the examined living group, an educational environment is produced by way of cultural capital that is equal to a middle-class educational environment. At the same time, it can be observed that the meagre personnel resources are unable to pass the cultural capital to the children.
Ellen Kloet, Windesheim University

Innovation in a profession-oriented context

Purpose;

In 2015 Windesheim University started implementing a new educational concept. This concept provides students and teachers autonomy to create a small-scale, flexible and high quality educational environment in which learning goals such as (the so-called) 21st century skills and reflection on the value and values of professional skills are implemented in curriculum. The implementation means a major policy shift: less ‘top-down’ and more ‘bottom-up’ curriculum design and organization (Evers & Kneyber, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Senge, 2012). This paper describes and explains the different processes, views and outcomes of teams of staff members responsible for the curriculum.

The research focusses on three teams implementing the educational concept. It describes the culture within these teams: their views on necessary adjustments, the way the innovation process is shaped and tries provide insights in the differences.

Design/methodology/approach;

This paper draws on an ethnographic study of three teams responsible for a curriculum, implementing this innovation. To describe the culture of the three teams, the research focused on four aspects: the physical and historical environment, social factors (like grouping and faculty organization), individual behavior of members of staff, and cultural factors (such as social stratification, sense of pride (Wolcott, 2010). The data were triangulated from field notes of observations, examination of secondary sources, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and photographs. In university-wide activities the data were gathered by participant observations.

Findings;

The physical environment of all three programs show great differences and indicate various views on teacher – student interaction and learning conditions. Interesting is the way the teams struggle to adjust the new found freedom to their views on leadership. The differences can be explained by understanding the views on education, by exploring the hidden curriculum and the implied student (Margolis, 2001; Ulriksen, 2009). The occupational field to which the program is dedicated shows a major impact on the culture within the team.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

This research was conducted in a Dutch university with a profession-oriented context.

Practical implications (if applicable);

The perspective for this paper is to sharpen the understanding of the influence of culture in Higher education programs on innovation processes.

In the paper three case studies will exemplify the relation between culture and the innovation process and outcomes. The theoretical conceptualization is focused on combining organizational characteristics of universities as described by Mc Nay (1995) and hidden curricula.


Educational Ethnography in the Field of Health Care

Purpose

The PhD project conducts ethnographic studies and follows an on-going educational development and collaboration project, InBetween (in Danish, InterTværs) between hospital, municipality, university and university college located in Aarhus, Denmark. The purpose of InBetween is to develop a model to strengthen patient centred interprofessional and cross-sectorial collaboration skills for students. A model where students from medicine-, physiotherapy-, occupational therapy-, clinical dieticians and nursing bachelor degree programs, as a team, focus on a patient pathway through the health care system.

The research objective is to investigate clinical educator’s practical competence profile in relation to organizational requirements for the development of interprofessional and cross-sectorial collaboration skills.

Methodology/approach

The PhD project’s approach is described as ‘multi-site ethnography’ and involving a mix of Methods (Borgnakke 1996 & 2013, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, Marcus 1995), including participant observations, interviews, videos, audio logbooks and documents. The research project’s practice orientation is emphasized as the interprofessional practice is studied in the health care field and in real learning contexts, following InBetween where clinical educators participate. The project is inspired from action research.

The PhD project is moving on several levels, on the political macro-level, the regional meso-level and on the practical micro-level. The movements between different levels of importance influence the theoretical approaches, correspondingly moves between the concepts of the professional communities of practice, mono- and interprofessionalism and concepts attached directly to the supervising situation and learning potential.

Contribution

This paper focus on the methodological challenges conducting ethnographic studies in the field of health care. Furthermore, the paper reflects on implications of doing educational ethnographic in the health care sector.

References:


Borgnakke K. 1996. Pædagogisk feltforskning og procesanalytisk kortlægning (bd.1), Procesanalytisk metodologi (bd.2, Kap 3, s. 52-64): Akademisk Forlag.


Krystallia Kyritsi, University of Edinburgh

Using an ethnographic approach to explore children’s perspectives on creativity: methodological choices and practices that encourage children’s active involvement in the data generation process

Purpose;

This methodological paper is part of my PhD research, which is about exploring children’s and teacher’s perspectives on creativity within one primary school classroom in Scotland. To explore this topic, I adopted an ethnographic methodology. This paper discusses methodological practices and choices that helped me to understand and explore children’s views on creativity and, also, to motivate children to obtain an active role during the data generation process.

More specifically, this paper discusses my decision to encourage children to bring with them cultural artefacts or other prompts that could generate discussion during the interview process. This was also an attempt to not impose my own views on creativity to the children, but to give them the space to express what creativity means to them. This choice was based on Davis et al.’s (2000) arguments that researchers should use opportunities that can be found in children’s social worlds in order to obtain understanding of their lives.

Furthermore, in an effort to offer new avenues to encourage children’s active involvement in data generation, I introduced an innovative model for obtaining informed consent: the secret boxes. This model was based on arguments that prompt researchers to consider the pluralities and diversities of childhood (James, 2002), as well as the need to implement ethical procedures that respect children’s autonomy as research participants (James and James, 2012), and to respect their anonymity (Tisdall et al., 2009).

This paper also describes the process of re-negotiable and ongoing consent, as mentioned above and, additionally, discusses the creation of opportunities for the children to critique particular stages of the research process and the research findings.

Design/methodology/approach;

This research used an ethnographic methodology. Participant observation and interviews were used as methods for data generation (Mason, 2002). As a researcher, I was a member of the community, interacting and discussing with people (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and, also, learning from them (Davis, 2009). The aim of this ethnography was to produce thick descriptions of the field, to enter into ‘children’s cultures of communication’ (Christensen, 2004: 166) and to research for and with children (Gallagher et al., 2008). The research employed participant observation to generate data from the representation of social life of the field and from informal chats and interactions. Informal conversations were taking place every day and helped me to obtain a better understanding of children’s perspectives.

The ethnographic data were documented in field-notes and this paper will include data extracts of what I observed. The paper will also analyse the way in which I was keeping notes was a subject of discussion with children.

Findings;

The paper briefly discusses findings on children’s perspectives on creativity. Those findings include themes about collaborative creativity, creativity and power, control, performativity and creativity and freedom / flexibility.
Most importantly, the paper emphasises on the discussion of the findings of;

a) the use of cultural artefacts that were chosen by the children themselves to communicate their messages with me during the interviews

b) the use of the ‘secret boxes’ on a daily basis and the multiple understandings that children had on the use of the boxes

c) children’s critique on the research process and the research findings.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

This paper contributes to the dialogue regarding methodological and ethical practices within doing ethnographic work by presenting findings concerning the implementation of the ‘secret boxes’ model. Its contribution further draws on the suggestion that researchers should utilise opportunities found in children’s social worlds rather than creating special research opportunities (Davis et al., 2000). Finally, this paper supports children’s active involvement within research practices and provides a detailed account of how this research contributed to this aim during the data generation and the dissemination process.
Kristina Lanå, Stockholm University; Anneli Schwartz, University of Borås

The significance of place in relation to school value

Purpose; There is an extensive media discourse about educational performance between groups of pupils defined by socioeconomic status, ethnicity and gender (Beach, 2016). The place and geographic location of the school is often part of this discourse. Place is an important factor when it comes to understanding exclusion in education. Geographic place contributes to stigmatize the reputation of schools and their pupils (cf. Bunar, 2001). Schools and their pupils don’t live their own lives on their own conditions, but are influenced by different factors and structures in their surroundings. The present paper has been developed to explore this significance of place in the development of school value.

Design/methodology/approach; Our research emanates from two different ethnographic studies in three different schools in Sweden for pupils between 13 and 19 years of age. Extensive participant observation at the schools together with field and formal interviews formed the main data-production strategies. Two of the schools may be defined as one urban and one suburban multicultural school, and the third one as a high-status city school. The study includes classroom observations and interviews from the three schools between 2008 and 2013. We have, in this paper, called the schools simply school A, B, and C.

School A is a suburban municipal grade 7-9 school for pupils aged 13 to 16 years. The area where the school is placed has been identified internationally as socially vulnerable. The pupils come from 50 different national backgrounds and 40 different languages are spoken. School B is an independent upper secondary (16-19) school in the central part of one of Sweden’s three major cities. It has a special pedagogical profile as a school that uses youth culturally informed pedagogies to motivate learning and involvement. The pupils travel to the school from different parts of the city. A little bit more than one fourth are of migrant background and most of them come from lower social backgrounds. School C is an inner city high status upper secondary school. It is a magnet school that attracts pupils from socio-economic strong back-grounds from outside the area. About 10-15% of the pupils are of migrant background.

Findings; The findings from the present analysis are that pupils’ social and ethnic backgrounds are seldom taken into consideration when it comes to questions such as if pupils have equal opportunities to influence teaching, get good results/marks and succeed in their school studies. Instead actor (e.g. teachers and headmasters) understanding of pupils’ chances to succeed in their studies relate to which geographic area the pupils come from (Schwartz, 2013) in terms of where they lived. For those from low socio-economic multi-cultural areas this meant they were described as non Swedish persons from within. Also of note was that the pupils’ ethnic backgrounds were seldom spoken of at all in relation to this definition of otherness (Lanå, 2015). Instead headmasters and teachers talk about what areas the pupils live in.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable); The investigations and the three schools, and above all the combined meta-analysis, identify along with Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) how discourses about ethnicity and social background are actually produced through references to place. Residential areas separate and create differences, signifying who is inside and outside and so to speak produce exclusion and inclusion. Where pupils come from seems to be in fact more significant than other features including even social class or ethnicity. Areas
are territorially stigmatized (to paraphrase Wacquant) and the stigma precedes the encounter with the individual (Bunar 2001; de los Reyes 2007).

Social implications (if applicable); As described in Schwartz (2013), this way of talking about poor places and their inhabitants is by no means unique to the particular school or Sweden alone (Beach et al, 2013). Young people from poor suburbs and their forms of knowledge are often described by negative conceptualizations as damaged through growing up in the places they come from (Öhrn, 2011). In this sense the territorially stigmatized suburb is not only a geographic place it is also a social position (Dikec, 2007; Shim, 2012), as a non-Swedish place full of immigrants, poverty, exclusion segregation and marginalisation. One of the teachers explained how this affected the pupil’s possibilities to succeed in school as follows: If you look at it, this place is like a social-democratic Polish ghetto... It is precisely this; it is a concentrated ghetto that affects the pupils.
Purpose: This paper describes the initial findings of an ethnographic study within a large, federally funded U.S. educational research project to improve primary, secondary, and tertiary STEM education. Joining this project midway through its five year funding cycle, David Long initiated a program of organizational ethnography (Ybema, 2009) to document, via implementation research, the successes, failures, and political maneuverings of program staff. As Long details in his findings, although his research plan was approved by program leadership, it became clear midstream that that same leadership neither understood the research design they signed off on, nor the implications of having such an analytical lens examining program ‘dirty laundry’. While there was certainly much good about the project, there was plenty of such laundry. As Long explores, spurious justifications of prior research findings and cherry picked cases were presented, as it appears, to win the competitive grant that funded the project—the largest ever received by this university, some $34,000,000. As program evaluation reports began to show limited or muddied results counter to the optimistic public relations campaign inflated over the project, much energy was spent in disciplining the messaging of the project. In line with this university’s evolving, status-seeking identity and ethos, one outside critic of the university has deemed it “the Neoliberal Mothership”.

As many have observed (Hursh, 2007), logics of neoliberal rationality have come to dominate educational research inquiry and the funded projects it represents. Working within this constricted frame, many still ironically mobilize the banner of social justice as a legitimization technique. A large amount of such work deploys this terminology not as an intended actionable ethos, but as a floating signifier—doing the work needed to appease grant language requirements, and signing social responsibility. Sponsored projects, in the work of U.S. post-secondary scholars, as well as many other settings, have become the coin of the realm. Grants above all else.

This paper is the first work presenting what the author is developing as a book-length project. As critical analysis of failed or problematic project management has little reward in neoliberal reward rationality this project describes a needed, but often avoided lens of analysis on large educational reform project management.

Design/methodology/approach

While poorly developed in educational research, Flyvbjerg, Landman, and Schram’s (2012) framework of phronetic social science has had great impact in large project management and organizational study. The model asks four questions of complex, value-laden human social systems: (1) Where are we going?, (2) who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?, (3) is this development desirable?, and (4) what, if anything, should we do about it? As the largest science education reform project ever funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Long employs this model to analyze data spanning five years and servicing hundreds of primary and secondary teacher participants, multiple research university implementation sites,

and ultimately affecting thousands of students. Data collection methodology was informed by a framework of organizational ethnography (Ybema, 2009), situated within an implementation research design to identify and recommend improvements to educational practice. Data collected by Long and a team of ten field researchers under his direction includes surveys, interviews, program physical and digital artifacts, and field notes. With this
approach, we gain both the quality check of norms of implementation research (Fixsen 2014) and the interior gaze at the management of power relationships that drive a large project in different ways. Such a data collection protocol provides the means to answer Flyvbjerg’s four questions.

Findings

In this paper, Long will focus on the following insights from this project. 1) The legitimation process of questionable prior research findings to justify the project, 2) the assembly of confidants and social-networked power structures across educational institutions that supported these processes, 3) the repackaging of negative evaluation findings from student outcomes data to support program public relation goals, and 4) negotiating doctoral researcher training and awareness as the project began failing.

The project adds to the small but growing literature on large educational project management in the era of neoliberal rationality.

The project shows a concrete analysis of the public good being compromised by careerist actors putting university gain above the commons.

References


What do children’s homes do with children in care? An ethnographic analysis of educational social practices from the inside of a Residential Child Care Institution.

Purpose;

This presentation shows an analysis from a study focused on understanding what children’s homes do to achieve their main institutional goals, that is, improving the personal development and social integration of children in care.

Accordingly, we carried out an educational ethnography in order to identify the main social practices that compounded the everyday life of the home. This is an important task to do because mainstream studies using quantitative pre-post studies or mix-methods research focused either on individual or on institutional factors. This left apart any interest on the actual everyday life of the children within the homes. Therefore many relevant social and cultural processes, essential to understand how children’s homes achieve their goals, remain unknown or understudied.

The purpose of this analysis was to identify, categorised and discuss the social structure of the everyday life in one children’s home. To do so, we used the concept of “social practice” (Wenger 2001), and particularly the concepts of “formal”, “informal” and “paradoxical” practices from a previous theoretical model by Palomares and Poveda (2010).

Design/methodology/approach;

For this study, we carried out 69 days of participant observation during 9 month in a Spanish children’s home in 2009. Fieldwork were registered in fieldnotes during the observation and completed usually the day after in the office. Although we had great cooperation from front-line workers, we had not permission to audio-record interviews or record any situation on video camera. In any case, we carried out semi-structured interviews that we registered in notes. Also, we could record on audio some relevant social practices in the home such as the educator´s handover or the children´s assembly. Finally, we had access to institutional documentation that we could read within the home, but that we could not take out or photocopy.

For the analysis we present here, the fieldnotes were analysed from different perspectives for different purposes. We used the theoretical approach by Palomares and Poveda to categorise social practices; Grounded theory by Strauss and Corbin (1990) to identify tools, strategies or processes used by front-line workers to achieve their institutional/educational goals; and the analysis of talk-in-interaction (Schegloff 2007) to understand the sequential organization of the recorded interactions.

Findings;

Our findings give a broad picture of the inside of a children’s home as an educational institution.

Firstly, we identified a set of different social practices (as defined from both the participant’s and the researcher’s perspective) compounding the social and educational activity in the home. We could see an interesting unbalance between “formal”, “informal” and “paradoxical” practices and its distribution in the space/time matrix of the institution.
Secondly, and within these practices, we found and classified different tools, strategies and processes used by front-line workers to achieve their institutional/educational goals. From this analysis, we can see some initial differences between the intended educational actions and the actions that actually took place in real-time practice.

Thirdly, we highlight and discuss the findings comparing children’s homes with other educational institutions.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

The findings presented here highlight the necessity of ethnographic research to account for relevant social and cultural processes within children’s welfare institutions.

Residential child care institutions have been defined as places of “complexity” (Stevens 2007). These settings are ideal to understand how multiple factors intervene in children’s social life including the institutional level, which is especially relevant nowadays since non-institutional spaces are being lost in infancy.

Social implications (if applicable);

Opening-up children’s homes, and furthermore, making heard the necessity of opening-up certain delicate institutions might lead to a reconsideration of many basic but apparently forgotten debates in children’s welfare. Why is it the child and not the aggressor who must leave the family home? To what extend are we benefiting or harming children when they are taken into care? Are professionals properly trained to face the most challenging situations and cases? Are we conscious of the paradoxical practices and the undesirable impact of many of them? How is it complexity managed and how does this affect children?
I am embarking on a ‘difficult’ research journey. Doing educational qualitative research “in this time of “methodological fundamentalism” (Denzin et al., 2011, p.770), ‘paradigm proliferation”(Lather, 2006) and “methodological contestation”(Wright, 2006) is becoming so complex and so challenging. Doing qualitative research and in particular engaging in critical ethnography at this moment of theory and methodology profuse, and in particular using a transnational feminist lens to theorize and conduct my research requires an engagement with novel discourses of ethnography, reflexivity, positionality, and representation.

My attempt here is to conceptualize my ethnographic adventure, detect its complexities and challenges and reflect on its different “dangers, seen, unseen, and unforeseen” (Milner IV, 2007, p. 387). I contend that ethnographic research has gone thorough different contested phases and has witnessed a “changing story” (Clair, 2003, p. 3).

In this paper, I am reflecting on critical ethnography, its promises and limitations. I also problematize reflexivity, positionality, representation and voice when engaging with critical ethnography to explore how Muslim youth negotiate their identities and the impact of their schooling experiences in this process. Being a “Muslim” feminist researcher and doing research with/about/for Muslim youth does entail a lot of complexities and dilemmas. I proceed with my reflections on critical ethnography.

My engagement with critical ethnography emanates from the ‘political’ and the ‘critical’ dimensions that this research is embracing. Critical ethnography allows me to get a deeper understanding, a closer look and a complex and rich data. It is hard to map the contours of a research done by a Muslim researcher researching Muslim youth, the boundaries of researcher/researched and the insider/outsider get blurry and critical ethnography in this context helps navigate this difficult research terrain.

In my work I engage with reflexivity of discomfort to reflect on my positionality; my subjectivity, my privilege as a researcher, my identity(ies), the power relations and the knowledge claims that are inherent in my research processes and also the forms of oppressions that shape my subjectivity and that eventually will come up through my research. Reflecting on “my story” is intertwined with how I perceive and conduct my research and how this would impact the participants. I acknowledge that the meanings I would give to the issues and experiences investigated in this study also reflect my own world views that are shaped by my membership in social groups based on, but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, class, status, and age. I argue that these multiple “positions” can’t be dealt with separately, but they incessantly intersect and overlap.

I contend that working with reflexivity is a complex task that destabilizes the researcher’s certainties, and shakes the “common senses”; it is a transformative process because it is “turning in upon ourselves” and it “should involve putting ourselves in tension with the historical and cultural forces that situate us in the world” (Chawla & Rodriguez, 2011, p. 80). Dillard (2006) argues that “It is essential too that we examine the underlying knowledge of worldview,” and she explains that “our worldviews arise out of what those around us believe, our experience within the communities in which we live, and what those who are perceived as legitimate and powerful in our eyes tell us of the nature of the world (p. 63). This means that the researcher should examine the complexities of his/her history, subjectivity, identity,
gender, race, sexuality, and class in relation to the research itself and how these impact the whole research process while being cautious of the essentialist view of “What” and “who” we are. This paper reflects on these dilemmas, asks questions and engages in mapping my ethnographic journey.
The ethnography of classroom practices in South Africa

Purpose:

The paper focuses on ethnographic studies that have been conducted in South African classrooms over the past 20 years. The explanations and interpretations in these studies are treated as data for producing a synthesis that clarifies complexities that characterise researchers’ subjectivities in South Africa.

The explanations and interpretations will be contextualised to clarify how the authors as subjects played an essential role in the studies. They could not abstract themselves from the cultural/material realities that influenced how they described and made sense of what they witnessed. The conclusions they draw in each of the studies are part of these realities.

The synthesis developed will thus be used to describe the significance of the different contexts and positioning of the authors through the explanations and interpretations provided in each study. The ideas, concepts, metaphors in each will be presented to reinterpret how these aspects are products of the meanings brought in and generated further in the contexts in which the authors were embedded as subjects (Alexander, 2000).

Design/methodology/approach:

A meta-ethnographic approach will be adopted to synthesise studies that were conducted at different times and in different areas within South Africa. The paper will detail the contexts in which and for which ethnography was used to study ways in which socially given meaning has been constructed to build up interpretations of teaching practices.

Of the studies sampled 10 will be selected in which there is evidence of the researchers having gone beyond a mere record of participants’ actions to a description and interpretation that provided details about how the context, feelings, relationships and histories of the actions that were witnessed in the classrooms were made sense of.

Findings:

The different ways in which researcher(s) found themselves positioned in the studies will be interesting to examine. Even though ethnography underscores the benefits of recognising the power of local knowledge and practices as culture that cannot be easily overlooked and undervalued, to varying degrees, this would at times be compromised. Specifically, the authors’ subjectivities and orientations internalized (Soudien & Sayed, 2004) in different contexts will be described to explain how they could have been responsible for overlooking or underplaying the significance of the meanings promoted in the contexts in which the studies were conducted.

Research limitations/implications

Since the study aims to highlight the contribution of a meta-ethnographic approach to enhancing understanding of teaching, each researcher’s or researchers’ positioning within a study, that is, presence in the research setting represented a reality that had to be sampled. It had some influence over how each study was conducted. The scope of the synthesis, comparability and generalisations, will be restricted by the concepts used by the authors and their research settings.
Practical implications

A critical test for a study of this kind is whether what the researchers purport to have synthesised is recognized as valid by the authors (Britten et al., 2002). Therefore paying attention to the authors and researchers’ interpretations will be crucial to the re-interpretation developed in the synthesis. Their significance in capturing how classroom practices and the patterned ways in which they were considered were made sense cannot be overlooked.

Social implications

The distributive effects of policies cannot be understood without establishing how practices in schools integrate cultural values and traditions from teachers and students as co-actors embedded within families and communities.
Pauline Moger and Carl Bagley, Durham University

Uncovering Policy Legacy: An Ethnographic Account of a Secondary School’s Commitment to Creativity.

Purpose

The research seeks to make an original, rigorous and significant contribution to knowledge as it relates to the understanding of policy legacy. To-date qualitative research in the field of policy has tended to focus on the complexities of process associated with policy enactment; investigating the relationship between national policy discourse and the ways in which this discourse is creatively reconstituted in school-based contexts of practice. The study, in building on this research, is concerned with uncovering and exploring the ways in which a commitment to a specific policy – in this case creativity – is enacted, embedded and sustained within a school and has a legacy even after national policy discourse and priorities have changed.

Design/methodology/approach

The study is based on a three year in-depth ethnographic investigation undertaken in one secondary school. The study, theoretically informed by symbolic interactionism, collected field-work data through a range of traditional ethnographic methods. It utilized participant observation in a range of formal and informal settings within the school including immersion in specific curriculum development initiatives. It included semi-structured interviews with key individuals and groups associated with the school’s commitment to creativity including leadership team members, teachers, parents, and pupils. Semi-structured Interviews were also conducted with key personnel from regional arts-based stakeholder organizations associated with the school. A documentary analysis of school brochures and polices and regional and national policy statements on creativity was also undertaken. The data were subsequently analyzed through a thematic approach with emergent categories identified, grouped and used to present the findings.

Findings

The findings compliment previous research on policy response and enhance academic understanding of the ways in which policy is enacted, embedded and sustained by a process of creative social action at a school-based level; one which has a legacy even when national policy pressures, expectations and priorities change. The findings uncover a number of key factors as playing a critical part in the school’s working relationship with creativity. Factors of particular salience relate to the school’s ethos and culture as conducive to the notion of creativity, the leadership style and structure enabling a distributed commitment to creativity amongst staff at all levels, the alignment and embedding of creativity within curriculum development initiatives, and the external support provided to the school from arts-based regional personnel.

The data also tentatively point to the potential fragility of sustaining a policy initiative when the national policy environment changes and particular school-based factors associated with strategic policy resilience in relation to creativity are placed in jeopardy. Conceptually the findings support and strengthen previous research on policy enactment and creative social action at the level of the school, highlighting the temporal, complex and contested nature of policy legacy.
Akiko Nambu, University of Exeter

The influence of school culture on the effective implementation of a team-teaching policy in the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme: an ethnographic case study

Purpose; Aiming at internationalisation, the Japanese government initiated the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme in 1987 by introducing team-teaching by indigenous Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and young native English speaking graduates from overseas as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) into English language classrooms throughout Japanese public schools. Previous studies have shown that there have been, in some cases, a lack of interaction between the JTEs and ALTs. However, these studies tended to focus mainly on classroom activities and consequently the teams were found to be the main cause of ineffective teaching and learning. However, it should be noted that interaction and collaboration extend beyond the walls of the classrooms to the school as a whole. The role of the school and the impact of the team-teaching participants on and from the institution will depend to some extent on the nature of the school and its culture. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how teachers’ teams (JTEs’ and ALTs’) perceived their roles and how they are influenced by school cultures, as well as identifying which aspects of the school culture could impact on the effectiveness of the JET Programme. It also investigates the ways in which the ALTs are welcomed and accepted into the schools as well as how the ALTs cope with the contexts of specific school settings and cultures.

Design/methodology/approach; In order to gain a deeper understanding of these team-teaching interactions and problems, the conceptual framework of this ethnographic case study (6 months) was based on Holliday’s concept of ‘small cultures’ and Lave and Wenger’s theory of communities of practice. Data for the study were obtained from 4 ALTs, 7 JTEs, 3 administrative teachers and 1 PE teacher through semi-structured individual interviews, observations of team-taught lessons of 5 teams and school activities outside the classrooms which ALTs attended, as well as extensive fieldnotes, artefacts and documents.

Findings; The findings revealed the complexities of the school cultures (as small cultures) and the effect that these cultures had on the perspectives of ALTs and JTEs, their roles and contributions and on the relationships between the ALTs and JTEs. In order to find solutions for problems concerning the lack of interaction between the JTEs and ALTs, studies by Gillis-Furutaka (1994) and Hiramatsu (2005) suggest that both JTEs and ALTs should be given opportunities to extend their pedagogical knowledge base related to TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), pointing out the lack of opportunity for learning. However, what my own study found is that the lack of two-way interaction is dependent largely on how their roles are shaped within the particular school cultures. Gaining pedagogical knowledge of TESOL at the personal levels is insufficient to improve team-teaching interactions between the JTEs and ALTs. The cultures also strongly affected the roles of schools as teachers’ professional development communities. This is closely linked with issues concerning identity and power. The JET Programme aims to promote collaboration by introducing team-teaching; however, the result is that it imposed collaboration on the schools. Without considering the complexities of the school cultures, it is extremely difficult to achieve improvements in team-teaching interactions.
Research limitations; This 6 month-study was relatively short in terms of field visits. However, the short time period is compensated for by collecting multiple forms of data which provided sufficient information to address the research aims and to add to our current knowledge of team-teaching.

Practical implications; This study suggests that the JET Programme needs to be tailored to the specific culture, and that influential people in each school should be involved to overcome any difficulties caused by cultural aspects. These approaches may create supportive professional development communities within the schools and improve collaboration between the JTEs and ALTs.

Social implications; Intercultural awareness arose naturally from the ALT’s presence in the school. This awareness suggests the value of the perspectives of the ALTs as strangers, in that they were able to identify some more effective teaching strategies than those embedded in the local culture. The ALTs’ experience of making the strange familiar sheds new light on teaching and learning and helps to develop new theoretical perspectives and pedagogy (Osborn, 2015). These findings are transferable not only to team-teaching contexts where two cultures and norms clash, but also to those contexts where a newcomer joins a community.

References:


Market Methods: Ethnographic Research and Neoliberal Epistemologies

This methodology-focused article examines three avenues along which ethnographic and other qualitative methodologies are being appropriated and reconstituted in neoliberal forms. Rather than focusing on neoliberal transformations of higher education – the pressures and constraints on university-based researchers (e.g., Sayer, 2014; Ball, 2009; 2012), my starting point here is the observation that neoliberalism is in key senses an epistemological project (Hayek, 1945). Behind the program to remove state safeguards, contractualize citizenship, and privatize public institutions, is the idea that “the market” is the only way to produce useful social knowledge. Dismissing systematic inquiry and research as means of guiding or informing public affairs, Hayek argues that only the market can make sense of complex social action rapidly enough to be of use. As Mirowski (2013) summarizes central to neoliberalism is a core conviction that the market really does know better than any one of us what is good for ourselves and for society . . . The market does the thinking for us that we cannot. The real danger to humanity resides in the character of mistakenly believes he can think for himself. . . . Special institutions dedicated to the protection and pursuit of knowledge can more or less be dispensed with as superfluous . . . Science should essentially dissolve into other market activities” (pp. 79, 82)

This vision of neoliberalism appears to value of the “local,” “subaltern,” and “subjugated” knowledges that ethnography often focuses upon – but it values them only insofar as they can be related to the market. Ethnographic and qualitative research are accepted as legitimate, but are being transformed in at least three ways:

1) The instrumentalization of ethnographic research as a means through which the powerful can construct and control narratives of the past. Neoliberalism extends economic reasoning to all realms of activity, and as noted above, Hayek (1945) argues that knowledge must be directly and immediately accessible to be of economic value: “the economic problem of society is mainly one of rapid adaptation to changes in the particular circumstances of time and place . . . the ultimate decisions must be left to the people who are familiar with these circumstances, who know directly of the relevant changes and of the resources immediately available to meet them” (p. 524). Researchers who cannot operate at this time-scale are necessarily always studying the past, lagging behind decision-makers, who must exhibit the ‘bias towards action’ embraced by both major American parties (e.g., Peters & Waterman, 1982; Clinton, 2014). This does not mean their work is without value; rather, its value lies in the post-facto representation of action, as a ‘slipstream’ methodology: knowledge trails action and reinforces market discourses and the standpoints of dominant institutions.

2) Closely related is the privatization of ethnographic method and its translation into corporate methodology, best exemplified by for-profit firms such as Experientia, Sapient Nitro, Context-Based Research Group, and in-house ethnographic units at firms like Intel and Microsoft (see the annual conferences of the “Ethnographic Praxis in Industry” organization) (cf. McCuistion, 2008). This work goes beyond simple legitimization to create business-friendly forms of ethnography.
3) The proliferation of ‘lay’ or participatory research employing qualitative methods to document local conditions (Hess, 2010). In itself this can be read both as a devolution of the knowledge-generation functions formerly filled by public institutions such as the state and the public universities, and at the same time as a form of critical democratic practice: Dagnino (2005), describing analogous effects in other contexts, notes that such activities reflect the “perverse confluence” within neoliberal regimes of the kind of “active, proactive civil society” that can ‘deepen’ democracy – here in the form of groups taking responsibility for studying and constructing knowledge about themselves and their situations – and the neoliberal project of stripping the state of “its social responsibilities” and “role as guarantor of rights” (p. 158) – in this instance its responsibilities to sponsor if not directly undertake such research on the well-being of citizens.

My aims in this critique are genealogical – to examine the forms, conditions of possibility, and processes of emergence for such appropriations of ethnography. I highlight contradictions in each of the three efforts, and conclude by pointing to possibilities for ethnographic work in education that contest neoliberal appropriations.
Rikke Toft Nørgård, Aarhus University; Carol B. Brandt, Temple University

Technological imagination and ideation: educational design thinking in the studio beyond STEM/STEAM

Purpose;

The purpose of this paper is to extend our thinking about the role of new technologies in the design studio for primary and secondary education beyond the dominant ideologies of STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Aesthetics, and Math). Today, new technologies such as 3d printers, robots, computer programming tools, and modular electronics are employed as educational tools and materials within STEM education as STEM-inspired design studios are spreading within formal and informal education. Such design studios, also known under names such as makerspaces, hackerspaces, and fablabs, are creative, do-it-yourself (DIY) spaces where people can gather to ideate, create, invent, and learn with new technologies. Thus, dominant STEM concepts and discourse shape the kinds of design work, thinking and tinkering taking place with new technologies in education (see e.g. Blikstein 2013 or Honey & Kanter 2013).

As a counterbalance to the STEM-inspired design studio, a three-year research through design process and ethnographical work in developing a design studio beyond STEM/STEAM has been carried out to point towards new potential understandings and practices in design work with youth. We demonstrate how robots, 3d printers, coding, and digital fabrication could easily be as pertinent, obvious and significant within the arts and humanities as they are within STEM. Importantly, we argue that simply putting an A (Aesthetics) in STEM practices is not sufficient: Making objects aesthetic, using pink paint and glitter will not make activities with new technologies relevant within arts and humanities.

Thus, this paper presents a new approach to technologies through educational design thinking to consider new futures for technology in the design studio beyond STEM/STEAM. Our theoretical lens draws on design thinking (e.g. Nelson & Stolterman 2012; Edelson 2009), playful constructionism (Brown & Vaughan 2009; Resnick 2007; Sicart 2014), situated learning, craftsmanship and the design studio (Lave & Wenger 1991; Sennett 2008; Schön 1987; Shorter 2015) and critical pedagogy (Biesta 2013; Freire 1974; Dewey 1916).

Design/methodology/approach;

The use of prolonged ethnography as research through design allowed the deep understanding of the interactions, experiences and emerging practices of educational design thinking in the studio. A methodological inquiry was constructed focusing on constructing and capturing technological ideation and futuremaking beyond STEM/STEAM education in sensible and sensory ways.

The paper presents three concrete run-throughs of educational design thinking in the studio beyond STEM/STEAM within the after school program Coding Pirates CUDIM and Coding Pirates GameDev in Denmark. The ethnographic work consists of: run-through 1; 30 children meeting 8 Wednesdays for 2 hours each to produce a ‘Future Island’, run-through 2; 21 children meeting 14 Wednesdays for 2 hours to produce a ‘Future-fantasy tech-roleplay,’ run-through 3; 16 children meeting 14 Wednesdays for 2 hours to produce ‘Personal hacks of games for future gameplay.’

To present the developed comprehension of and process for educational design thinking in the studio, the paper contains rich visuals and evocative stories along the lines of Sarah Pink's Doing Visual Ethnography (2013) and Doing Sensory Ethnography (2009) and narrative
inquiry in education (Lyons & LaBoskey 2002; Connelly & Clandinin 1990; Conle 2000), in combination with educational ethnography (Walford 2008) performed as phenomenological research (Van Manen 1990; Van Manen 2014).

Findings;

Where dominant discourses in STEM would push youth to foreground scientific knowledge construction and engineering concepts we found youth using technology in novel ways to act out an understanding of the future, their educational futures, relationships with others and the larger world in the design studio beyond STEM/STEAM. Youths offer narratives of futuremaking through imaginative designs and narratives on how they might live in and make future society. Here, we see problem solving, reflective construction, and technological agency and competence was used not for the sake of increasing technological skills or literacy, but as a vehicle to express their identities in the world of their own making.

Research implications / Practical implications;

The paper represents an effort to move our own thinking and tinkering practices in relation to new technologies in education beyond STEM through offering an alternative voice to the current discourse and practice: The practices of technological imagination, ideation and futuremaking by youth and creative technological pedagogy beyond STEM/STEAM by educators. As youth collaborate, communicate, construct and critically reflect through new technologies to create educational futures in the design studio, they articulate new ways to conceptualize educational design thinking.

References:


Rikke Toft Nørgård, Aarhus University; Patricia Charlton, Institute of Education, University College London

Convention be damned – Let learning emerge: The power of an educational design thinking approach to new technologies in education

Purpose;

This paper focuses on the power of “learning with” in an authentic and purposeful inquiry approach to constructing knowledge and meaning resulting in resilient learners that are creative, collaborative, and critical in contributing to a value-based vision-driven diverse knowledge society (Abbott 2014; Sawyer 2006; Biesta 2013; Freire 1974; Freire & Macedo 1987; Rancière 2005). This shapes and changes the role of the educator to a role of ‘learning with’ and contributing to the knowledge construction process of inquiry and meaning. This research goes beyond Scardamala and Bereiter’s (2006) knowledge construction of the student to the broader active learning of value (contributing to) and validation (acknowledgement of) in education.

Furthermore, we examine how this ‘learning with’ in combination with new technologies constitutes new pedagogical practice and learning processes, that are blurring conventions around campus, courses, curricula, assessment and transmission of knowledge (Laurillard 2012; Selwyn 2011; Bennett & Oliver 2011; Aaen & Nørgård 2015; Bevan et al. 2015).

Based on long-term ethnographic work we describe knowledge construction, pedagogical patterns, transformational learning processes, SOLE (self-organised learning environments) and paradigm shifts in the context of educational processes with new technologies across formal and informal contexts. Ethnographic work in two contexts and countries – Coding Pirates CUDiM in Denmark and Learning through making in England – is engaged, discussed, and combined. The results of our comparative ethnographic studies provide an interdisciplinary framework that builds on the above works in combination with findings on processes with new technologies (Walter-Herrmann & Büching 2013; Nelsen & Stolterman 2012; Papert 2000; Resnick 2007; Philpott 2013; Tin 2013; ), how people learn (Bransford et al 2000), positive educaiton (Seligman et al 2009), and knowledge construction (Scardamala & Bereiter 2006). The framework aims at moving processes with technologies from machinist to humanist in ways that enables technological agency, identity, and citizenship to be established beyond STEM/STEAM.

Design/methodology/approach;

We find that having a thoroughly ethnographically founded understanding and interdisciplinary theoretically informed framework for thinking about 'learning with’ new technologies that moves beyond both conventional curriculum and assessment as well as narrow Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM) thinking holds great potential. As such, the paper presents a powerful framework developed from the above fields and informed by ethnographic work carried out over a four-year period within educational processes with new technologies.

Both authors are engaged in on-going ethnographic research in educational contexts with new technologies that are paradigmatic cases in relation to the purpose of the article. One of these contexts is ‘Coding Pirates Denmark’ spanning over 30 individual departments consisting of over 860 children (age 7-17). The other context is ‘learning through making’ in the UK, that started in 2012, and investigates student-led engagement, learning ownership through situated authentic learning experience, and exposure to collaborative learning experience (age 6 to 106). We use photo stories and narrative vignettes to present the
ethnographic work. Critical analysis involved deconstructing presumptions and taken-for-granted truths about and processes for new technologies in education.

Findings;

The concrete contribution of the paper is an ethnographically informed educational design thinking framework for pedagogical practice and learning processes with new technologies through collaboration, knowledge construction and critical design thinking in educational maker contexts. Here, the main focus of the ethnographic work is on how processes with new technologies are structured, performed and addressed as education in the educational context; how educators orchestrate and refer to these processes and how children engage and experience pedagogically patterned processes with new technologies.

Research and Practical limitations/implications (if applicable);

The illustrative approach of ethnographic rich constructions provide insight into the participatory design to create jointly constructed knowledge in education that highlights the value of authentic learning context and how this can be informed through pedagogical design thinking, that is, by considering jointly constructed knowledge through the concepts of 'learning with' both the teachers and the learners are students of the process of learning and are empowered beyond the classic barriers of education. The paper hopes to ethnographically enrich and theoretically substantiate studies of new technologies in education. It can also inform practitioners within these fields to broaden their thinking and tinkering with new technologies in primary and secondary schools and beyond.

References


Friendship fostering Environmentalism and Environmentalism fostering Friendship among Young People in Schools in Surabaya, Indonesia

Purpose

This paper aims to explore the relationship between young people's friendships and an environmental education (EE) program in high schools in Surabaya, Indonesia. The 'hypothesis' is that the structure and activities of the program nurture friendships, and vice versa, that friendships enhance the popularity and efficacy of the EE program.

The national program is called Adiwiyata, and was initiated and is administered by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. In Surabaya it is run by an environmental NGO, and has the imprimatur of the city government as an important element in their drive to make EE compulsory in schools.

The proposition is that social structures and institutions such as schools, and, in this case, the Adiwiyata program, enable the development of friendships, providing a catchment group, a constant flow of “content” in the form of environmental activities, a common purpose (environmentalism) exterior to the friend relationships, and a sense of belonging. In turn, the friendships fostered by the structure enable a more effective implementation of strategies to educate young people about environmental sustainability.

Design/methodology/approach

The paper uses ethnographic data collected through participant observation of Adiwiyata activities in two senior high schools in Surabaya, Jan-March 2015, supplemented with interview material from interviews with school student participants, teachers and ENGO activists. The aspects of friendship that are considered are gender relations, socio-economic status, popularity of student groups, values of respect and egalitarianism, and student leadership. The main aspects of EE that are considered are participation in pro-environmental activities and behaviours, rather than ideals, knowledge and attitudes, as the Adiwiyata program at these schools mainly aims at activity.

Findings

The ethnographic data show that the dense schedule of group environmental activities does indeed foster friendships among young people, and that friendships contribute to both the participation level of young people in environmental activities and to the efficacy of the EE.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable)

The two high schools chosen for this field work are active, even champion, participants in the Adiwiyata program. Other schools are less engaged, or deliberately decline to participate. This means that our schools show “best practice”, which in turn means that our findings are not necessarily applicable generally.

Practical implications (if applicable)
If schools participate in this program willingly, there is good reason for the teachers and activists involved to encourage socialising around group environmental or EE activities.

Social implications (if applicable);

Environmentalism is not necessarily an individual ideal or activity. In the Indonesian school context, environmentalism is a group activity, and if schools or environmentalists want to encourage pro-environment behaviours, doing this through group activities will probably be more efficacious than through motivating individuals.
The Key Situation Revisited

Purpose;

In this paper I re-examine some of the assumptions behind the key situation/key event concept and how it is used as an analytical tool in ethnographic research. The key situation/key event (Gumperz, 1976) or gatekeeping encounter (Erickson, 1975) emerged as a central construct in interactional sociolinguistic and micro-ethnographic research as it allowed to connect interactional processes with the structuration of the social order and the (re)production of social inequalities. Given this impetus, incorporating a "key event" notion often determines important practical decisions in the design and organization of linguistically ethnographic oriented research, such as: what spaces and moments of interaction should be documented?; how should selected episodes be examined?; what sources of data are relevant to interpret interaction during key events?. The outcomes of these studies have been undoubtedly productive, they showcase the relevance of interactional-oriented research for the study of complex social processes and have generated practical insights in various professional fields, notably in education and other areas relevant to child and youth welfare.

Design/methodology/approach;

Nevertheless, in this paper I want to explore some of the challenges behind the "key event" concept and the methodological package behind it, as well as offer some (tentative) ideas regarding how the notion could be expanded within research programs that are still sensitive to discursive processes and interactional detail. I organize my argument in two parts:

Findings;

(1) I bring to the foreground some of the implicit assumptions about the organization of the social world behind the key situation/event or gatekeeping encounter concept and research approach. I then discuss why these assumptions might need to be reconsidered in light of the increasing complexities of contemporary life and the social order.

(2) I elaborate on this revision by focusing on two research examples where the notion of key situation became relevant or irrelevant in unexpected ways to us. First, a two-year long ethnography in a secondary school in Madrid focused on the educational experiences and trajectories of immigrant students. Drawing from previous research our expectation was that we would be able to identify clearly bounded encounters where fundamental decisions regarding the socio-educational trajectories of students were determined (i.e. key events). However, this did not seem to be the case and our interpretive approach had to be revised in light of the data and the cumulative role of multiple interactional spaces in the construction of these trajectories. Second, a three-year long multi-sited ethnography focused on single-parent-by-choice families in Spain. Within this study, we examined professional discourses and practices in adoption procedures that explicitly construed the "suitability evaluation" in adoption procedures as a gatekeeping encounter to move forward adoptions by single-parent candidates, making explicit dominant ideologies about family and children's "best interests" as well as generating different reflexive practices around theses procedures in candidate families.
Winning and prestige: Environmental Education, burden and disempowerment in schools in Java, Indonesia

Purpose;

Like many countries, Indonesia is striving to improve its education outcomes across all areas of learning (Suryadarma & Jones, 2013; Suryahadi & Sambodho, 2013). Indonesia’s education system relies heavily on assessment and ranking of students and schools. Schools with the highest rankings attract the best students and schools with lower rankings are forced to find other ways to gain prestige and market themselves. Some schools focus on being an IT school, others specialise in the arts and a growing number of schools are becoming Adiwiyata schools, or Eco Schools. Adiwiyata is a free, voluntary environmental education program offered by the Ministry for the Environment for all schools in Indonesia. The Adiwiyata program meets the needs of lesser ranked schools in that it provides opportunities for them to be scored and achieve levels of Adiwiyata. In the two schools studied as part of this research project, the Adiwiyata program was found to be failing to address the core aspects of environmental education and instead focusing on using the program to gain prestige and make a name for the school as an environmental school.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how ‘environmental education’ is being used a tool for obtaining prestige in a very competitive education sector and the broader implications of this focus for environmental education programs, teachers and students.

Design/methodology/approach;

This paper draws on 12 months of PhD ethnographic fieldwork in Java, Indonesia, with two senior high schools (in Yogyakarta) and one environmental NGO (in Surabaya). The data were collected primarily through participant observation of classes, environmental celebrations and environmental education activities carried out both inside and outside of the school. Data collection methods also included focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with year 10-12 students, teachers, principals, NGO workers and government officials. This methodology allowed for a balance between the perspectives of young people and adults. The schools, one Islamic day school (Madrasah) and one state school (SMA), were selected because of their involvement in the state run, national environmental education program (Adiwiyata). The NGO was selected because of its working relationship with different government departments and 1500 schools in the region.

Findings;

This paper outlines the dominant pedagogies and approaches used by schools to ‘win’ and how these approaches reduce the educational and environmental value of the programs and fail to meet the objectives of the new curriculum, the Adiwiyata program and environmental education in general.

The implications of the ‘winning approach’ to environmental education are explored with particular focus on educational outcomes; environmental outcomes; the roles of teachers and students; and the resulting sense of disempowerment and burden for students.
The data suggest that ‘universal’ concepts of effective environmental education (as endorsed by UNESCO and western scholars) are not widely valued in the Indonesian education context and therefore call into question of the transferability of international environmental education programs and western concepts of effective environmental education to non-western contexts.

References


Everyday life in a super-diverse school for basic vocational training in the Dutch Randstad area

Purpose; This paper explores how conditions of super-diversity impact the everyday life of and social dynamics among students, and between teachers and students, in schools of middle vocational training in the Dutch Randstad. More specifically, guided by Bourdieu's notion of ‘a feel for the game’ as elaborated by the Dutch education sociologist Iliass El Hadioui, it provides a detailed analyses of the arsenal of strategies teachers have at their disposal to channel tensions and conflicts in class and to make successful matches between students’ various home and street cultures on the one hand, and the requirements of school on the other.

Design/methodology/approach; The fieldwork for this project took place in 2014 and 2015 at a ‘level 2’ school for middle vocational training for ‘Assistant in Care and Wellbeing’, mainly attended by female students, on average between 17 and 27 years old, from a variety of ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The data consist of some 90 hours of classroom observations, 40 interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with teachers and students, and member check meetings with the entire school team.

Findings; Since a couple of years, the demographic composition of the big cities of the Dutch Randstad (the area including Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague) has become ‘super-diverse’, i.e. there is no longer one ethnic majority group (Meissner & Vertovec 2015). Instead the population consists of a variety of bigger and smaller ethnic groups, with 60% of the younger generation having an immigration background. As a consequence, at many schools for (pre)vocational training the student population is very mixed, native Dutch students being by far in the minority. Teachers working at such super-diverse schools often express concerns about either the lack of any interaction, or the eruption of sometimes vehement conflicts between students from different ethnic and/or religious groups, and they often feel at a loss on how to deal with this. In this paper, we will firstly show that part of the tensions and conflicts in class are triggered by the institutional and organizational regulations set up to help these often vulnerable students from dropping out prematurely, hence can be seen as the perverse effects of the Dutch educational system as also pointed out by Crul et al (2013).

Secondly, we found that a further operationalization of the notion of ‘a feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1990) as proposed by El Hadioui (2011), provides a more fine-grained analysis of the micro dynamics occurring in mixed schools, and consequently of the factors hampering or contributing to a positive classroom environment. In this paper we will analyze in detail a number of cases we observed, zooming in on the main ingredients of, in terms of El Hadioui’s ‘a feel for the game’, either a successful match, a mismatch or a no match between the lifeworlds of students and the requirements of the school culture.

Practical implications; The fine-grained model of classroom dynamics, based on the notion that teachers at schools for (pre)vocational training can further refine their ‘feel for the game’, will be part of a toolkit for teachers to conduct collegial classroom observations and intervision.

References:


Beginning teachers’ experiences of secondary school subject departments

Purpose; Beginning teachers in England, mainly on one-year courses, spend the majority of their time in schools. Secondary schools are primarily organised around subject departments, and these subgroups have been shown to be significant – possibly more significant than the school – in various respects. However, research on school subject departments is relatively limited, and developing better understandings of departments is of importance to broader understandings of schools, teachers, and initial teacher education. This paper asks how beginning teachers experience school subject departments, drawing on an ethnographic study of three secondary school geography departments in England, and with a particular focus on departmental space-times, and shared norms.

Design/methodology/approach; This ethnographic research was conducted during a doctoral study focussing on knowledge using Bernsteinian and (broadly conceived) social realist tools. Ethnography’s concern with everyday practices, explored from a personal, embodied, and empathetic stance (Mills and Morton, 2013) makes it a particularly appropriate approach for studying beginning teachers’ experiences of school subject departments. I was present in the departments over one academic year, acting as a participant-observer. I taught lessons to cover for absent teachers, worked alongside students as a Teaching Assistant, organised resources, did photocopying, and made tea. Throughout the fieldwork, the iteratively designed study was intended to create opportunities for ‘engaged listening’ (Forsey, 2010, p.560). The extended time I spent in departments, and my sharing in tasks carried out by the teachers enabled me to listen to them in ways which may not otherwise have been possible for a study that looked superficially similar (such as an observation and interview methodology).

Findings; Beginning teachers’ experiences of these departments seem significant for their developing expertise, and aspects of departments (including space-times, and shared norms) are experienced by beginning teachers in quite different ways to the experiences of more established members of the department. In terms of departmental spaces, conversations facilitated by coffee and kettle space-times seemed to provide these teachers with their most significant form of discussions about subject knowledge, supporting the arguments made by Childs et al. (2013) that such interactions are ‘fleeting and serendipitous – a long way from the more systematic inquiry and reflection by individuals and departments that have been suggested result in teacher learning’ (p.51).

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in England involves, across many partnerships, the close working of schools and universities. The statutory guidance for 120 days to be spent in school during the training year (DfE 2015) reflects the long standing practice of many ITE providers to situate the majority of trainees’ experiences in schools. In addition to school-based calls for extended practical experience during ITE, a significant emphasis on ‘practical’ or ‘field’ experiences in the process of learning to teach...has also been advocated by many within the university sector in light of their understandings of the complexity of teaching and of the nature of professional learning’ (Burn and Mutton, 2015, p.217). Locating and accessing these rich mines of expertise demands more than simply being present in schools, partly because of the complexity of teachers’ professional knowledge and practice (Winch et al. 2015), and partly because of the nature of school subject departments. Implications for further research into school subject departments are suggested, particularly across subject disciplines and departmental organisational types, along
with suggestions for the preparation of beginning teachers to help them better understand and develop within departments.

The fleeting and serendipitous nature of conversations about subject knowledge facilitated by these departmental space-times has implications for all teachers, and may be of particular significance for beginning teachers’ experiences because of their position within the department and the evaluative nature of the relationship between beginning teacher and mentor. What constituted acceptance was contingent on the specific department and involved the problematic task of being ‘seen and yet not seen’ (Sirna et al. 2008, p.295): of successfully negotiating shared departmental norms.
Purpose;

In a two-year ethnographic study in a secondary comprehensive school, we examined the different ways in which students can be (un)successful and gain achievement/merit in individualised teaching and learning. In this project, we looked at the order of making differences between students as the order of merit and achievement. Our main thesis is that in the course of the introduction of individualised teaching and learning, a transformation of merit and achievement has occurred (Rabenstein et al. 2015). In the planned paper, we focus on the skills and capabilities which are especially constituted in practices of feedback. We ask how the students are subjectivated as being responsible for what they do as ‘their’ merit and achievement.

Design/methodology/approach;

Relying on a practice-theoretical perspective, we do not define achievement and merit as a disposition of a single person, but as a bundle of skills and capabilities which are produced in practices. For the constitution of the order of merit and achievement, especially those practices are relevant in which, on the one hand, someone receives a specific task and on the other hand, is made responsible – in front of others – for something as his/her achievement (Rabenstein et al. 2013). The bundle of capabilities and skills, which is produced in these practices, may be both relatively stable and – to a certain extent – dynamic and constantly changing (Rabenstein et al. 2015).

By means of our sample of observation notes and video material taken in two learning groups over a period of two years, we want to highlight especially practices of feedback and the assessment of achievement. Thus, we will touch the question of how a student is constituted as someone who receives merit and accomplishes achievement based on a social construction of his or her capabilities and skills in relation to the question of how something is practically constituted as achievement by somebody. This seems to be interesting against the background of the ethnographic studies about merit and achievement in teacher-class conversations (Zaborowski et al. 2011).

In teacher-class conversations, the evaluating feedback is widely understood as closure of a three step-concept coined by Mehan (1979): Initiation – Response – Evaluation (IRE). The evaluation does not only show the value of students’ responses in the classroom, but it also serves to perpetuate a flowing conversation (Kalthoff 1995). In contrast, in individualised teaching, we did not observe a permanently accompanying feedback by teachers. Instead, we detected distinct settings, each containing the function of feedback: morning meetings, feedback sessions after presentations and learning guidance conversations. Moreover, in our
field we observed different forms of feedback, such as teacher feedback, student-to-student feedback and feedback by self-regulation in which the students can evaluate their own success.

Our chosen method is Grounded Theory. In the planned paper, we particularly contrast some situations in which conflicts and misunderstandings are likely to interrupt routines of feedback with some situations in which routines of feedback can be observed.

Findings;
In feedback situations during morning meetings, the students’ working ability is constituted, whereas in teacher to student and student-to-student feedback sessions after presentations, one can observe how their individual achievement/merit is constructed as a bodily performance. In learning guidance conversations, which take place every six months, particularly the students’ ability of personal development is rendered significant. The students are made to students who are responsible for their development. In all settings, practices of feedback assume – spoken with Foucault – the shape of practices of observing oneself, speaking the truth about oneself (confession) and promising improvement. Nevertheless, they differ in the way and the degree to which the students are involved in these practices.

In our conclusion, we demonstrate what is shown as achievement and merit in each situation of feedback. Furthermore, the data provides detailed information of how an individual positions him/herself (or is being positioned) within a configuration of ‘responsibility’ and ‘his/her’ achievement.

References


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The Concept of Elite – Moving from Sports and into Basic School

Purpose; Our paper concerns the concept of elite moving from the world of sport into basic school. We focus on understanding the core meaning of this concept as deployed in elite sports classes in basic school and what changes it entails, when entering and translated in the respective environments of sports and in relation to basic school.

Much like in the other Scandinavian countries, sports in Denmark spring from mass and popular movements. Thus sports policies in Scandinavia in the post-World War period were driven by Social Democratic values and mass sports investments. By broadly supporting voluntary organisations sports policies predominantly followed a sociocultural principle of providing infrastructure for mass sports. From the late 1970s however, investment in elite sports increased considerably, driven by changes that implied an increased focus on competitiveness and national prestige, reinforcing tensions between mass and elite, and eventually passing legislation to advance elite sports.

In 2005 the first so-called elite sports classes were introduced at a basic school in Denmark. From 2007 they were introduced generally, allowing talented athletes to combine lower-secondary school education (grade 7-9) in Danish basic public schools with specialised talent development in their chosen sport. The entrance criteria and exams for these sports classes however, even if strictly related to the type of sport, were seen as contradicting the comprehensive principle of offering basic education for all; so sports classes throughout the country have until recently been banned from conducting entrance exams. But the recent school reform not only permits entrance requirements and exams from the school year 2014/2015 it also accepts the students’ incompliances of compulsory education due to elite sports activities.

While elite activities are increasingly prioritised in sports, the concept of elite can be considered more problematic in relation to the principles and purposes of the public basic school. Thus the Danish basic school is rooted in a tradition of a unified, comprehensive, and un-streamed school, which has emphasised community and democratic participation as a key value in schooling and therefore postponed streaming for as long as possible.

Design/methodology/approach; The study of the phenomenon of elite is based on an ethnographic fieldwork in elite sports classes in the Danish basic school. In our analysis we focus on the entrance exams for the sports classes, and more specifically on the testing procedures and selection processes, asking 1) what the implied selection means to the pupils involved and, more generally 2) how this move of the elite concept from sports into school is understood and translated in the disciplines of sport involved and – together with other measures of performativity – might influence on the public basic school system in general.

The conceptual analysis draws on a notion of elite that bears on to social advantage and exclusivity. But as pointed out by Ball in the 2005-yearbook of education, the term elites has been increasingly widely taken up in a whole range of field and there is no single or agreed usage or definition of it; it depends on the empirical focus and matter of theoretical orientation. As goes for the latter we are concerned primarily with the contribution of capital (Bourdieu) to access to and reproduce advantage.

Findings; The students who make it through the needle’s eye, pass the entrance exams to the elite sports classes and are selected as talents face an increased training volume, longer
transportation to school and less time with family and friends from their old schools. However, the students in the sports classes predominantly describe the move as positive because all students here accept that the spare time is spent practicing whereas they had to justify their choices in their previous school classes. Thus an elite career is still associated with radical deprivation, which now applies to students of primary school age. The students’ perception of former classmates’ lack of understanding also indicates that it can be difficult for outsiders to understand why someone would bank on an elite career and that cultivation of elites actualises questions of inclusion, exclusion, and social reproduction.
Jennifer Roberts, University of Edinburgh

How students negotiate emphasized femininities in a progressive secondary school environment in Scotland

**Purpose/aim(s):** The purpose of this ethnographic study is to look at how ‘emphasised femininities’ (Connell, 1995) are created and recreated in one of the most progressive state schools in Scotland, with a firm commitment to the ethos of diversity. This research considers how this ethnically diverse, middle-class, mix-sexed, metropolitan school continues to struggle to recognize and identify limiting dominant discourses of normative concepts of gender which undermine the possibilities of girls’ power and agency in the school environment and potentially their future.

Using detailed ethnographic portraits, I describe how specific students are forging their identities and power in relation to their experience of dominant gender discourses, considering their intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 1989) with a narrative description of their attempts to broaden the spectrum of alternative positions available to them.

**Ethnographic Portrait #1:** Through the ethnographic narrative of River, we follow a student who rebels against being identified as a girl at an age when gender is a highly visible source of social identity (Thorn, 1993). The determination to claim their own identity often places them in opposition to social constructed gender categories, sometimes resulting in being ostracised and pathologized by teacher and peers through the unexpected fluidity of the process.

**Ethnographic Portrait #2:** Born to parents with significant substance abuse problems, Dallie has grown up outside the social narrative of a ‘normal home.’ She has spent most of her youth in residential care, and has learned to identify herself more from the social perspective of what she is not, than what she is. She finds nothing new or surprising in being marginalized and attempts to forge her identity and agency by redefining and redeploying herself and her experience. Referring to herself as ‘the eyes and ears of the school,’ Dallie shuns the gender binaries that depict girls as irrational and weak, claiming a place for herself in her social hierarchy that she sees as strong, skilled and independent.

**Ethnographic Portrait #3:** Moving to the UK from Kenya as a teenager has allowed Shanna a degree of reflexivity to her teenage identity. Sarcastically labelling her experience of racism as ‘a magical journey’ Shanna forges her identity and agency through her physical strength and competence as an athlete often shunning more traditional performances of femininity while straddling her desire to please her highly Christian family who have more traditional views in mind for her.

**Methods:** Utilizing eight months of data collection in the form of observational field notes in classes ranging from PE, Modern Studies, Craft and Design, Business and Physics, as well as after school sporting clubs and Model United Nations, I map how socially constructed forms of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininities (Connell, 1995) emerge in the school setting. Student focus groups and interviews, as well as teacher interviews, provide insight into the school’s organizational principles, the accompanying regulatory process, and how power is constituted and operates with the hierarchical system (Foucault, 1980). With the goal of viewing alternative expressions of identity, I analyse this data to locate how the students attempt to free themselves from preconceived theoretical positions and binaries, which would normally prevent them from seeing options of differentiation outside what is naturalized.
Contribution: The goal of this study is to recognize the remaining obstacles to equality in socially constructed and naturalized gender expectations in what is widely regarded as a progressive educational environment, with the hope that these findings may suggest further research regarding the structures of unconscious gender bias and how they impact future generations.
Vibeke Røn Noer, VIA University College, Aarhus and University of Copenhagen; and Camilla Kirketerp Nielsen, University of Copenhagen.

“Student strategies – crossing contexts – towards the profession”

The paper aim to qualify discussions on profession-oriented education. The paper reflects the fundamental conditions of the profession-oriented educations - the alternating learning contexts and student’s multiples shifts between contexts - in new ways, attempting to widen and nuance the on-going debate on profession-oriented education. The paper aim to expand empirical knowledge on the actual teaching practices and student’s learning processes and to provide important perspectives on student’s study-strategies and their possible consequences in relation to both ‘life as a student’ and the process of professionalization. By maintaining the position of focusing upon the education as a situated and formative trajectory, the comparative analysis shows how students in profession-oriented educational settings manage the challenges of education and use study strategies characterised as both similar and very different within and across contexts and cases.

The paper is based on two independent case-studies referring to the educational field of future nurses and future veterinarians.

In the nursing educational environment, research has been conducted as ethnographic studies following students in an alternative educational model based on a principle of "practice before theory” – named the E-class. Planned as a full-scale study, students have been followed through all learning contexts, in the process from enrolment into the nursing program as members of the E-class until graduation and entrance into the nursing field as professional nurses.

In the veterinary educational environment, a project of game-based learning as a possible way of strengthening the interplay between practice and theory forms the basis of the research. Veterinary students have been followed through alternating learning contexts referring to both the scholastic academic classrooms and workplaces in commercial pig herds as well as to group work and game-based situations in a mandatory master course.

The projects differ in terms of both starting point and main focus of research. However, in the on-going process of research, an empirical ‘harmony’ on common recurrent themes related to students ‘study strategies’ emerged from frequent discussions between researchers. The repeated common empirical themes propelled the idea of a comparative analysis aiming to answer the following overall research questions:

• How do students in profession-oriented educations manage the multiple shifts in learning contexts?

• What study strategies do students in profession-oriented educations develop and what are the possible consequences?

The common comparative analysis is mainly empirically driven. In empirical terms the analysis refers to the Nordic tradition of classroom research (Lindblad and Sahlström, 2002; Klette, 2007) and pedagogical fieldwork/concept of study strategies (Borgnakke 1996ab, Borgnakke, 2008).
Theoretically, the two projects refer to theory and concepts related to learning situations and student learning processes considered as profession-orientated and situated formation processes (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010; Benner, 2011). Further, the empirical analysis draws on Bernsteinian concepts of contexts and re-contextualisation (Bernstein, 1973, 2000), and the concept of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The two research projects share a common methodological approach inspired by educational ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1997, Borgnakke, 1996, 2011, 2013). Further, common methodological principles of "following-the-field" - “following-the-case” – “following-the-learners” inspired by Marcus (1995), implies that students were followed in real educational time and rhythm – as they were alternating across the different learning contexts (from classrooms to workplaces in hospitals and commercial swine farms). The empirical material is generated using a mix of qualitative methods. The methods range from classical ethnographic studies; participant observation, spontaneous dialogues, photos, collection of documents and interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Borgnakke, 2013; Hastrup, 2010; Brinkmann, 2012, Kvale, 1997) to the experimental use of newer methods including videos and video diaries (Røn Noer, 2014; Møhl, 2012). The research projects were conducted independently, and consequently the empirical material was generated displaced in time and space. Individually, the projects have generated a rich, diverse and detailed empirical collection. The comparative analysis arose from discussions on analytic strategies, theoretical concepts and empirical analysis in the two projects and the identification of coinciding themes related to student’s study strategies. Hence, both the theoretical framework and the empirical analysis of each of the two projects have informed the comparative analysis. However, the comparative analysis is mainly empirically driven. The analysis has focused on revealing patterns of similarities and differences related to student’s study strategies in the shifting learning contexts both within- and across cases.

References


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Ethnography in a marketplace: teaching visually impaired researchers and setting a research agenda

Purpose:

There is an established body of literature on what Crang and Cook (1995:1) calls the “poetics and politics” of doing ethnography, but we know very little on the “poetics and politics” of doing ethnography by visually impaired researchers (VIRs) (Duckett & Prat, 2007; Wheeler, N.D). This research addresses some key issues of ethnographic “fieldwork” which may raise questions if not properly addressed by VIRs. Far from simplifying the core method of ethnography, this research deals with one of the most complicated but as yet largely unexplored areas of ethnographic research: doing ethnography by VIRs. There are some reports that reflect on the validity of VIR’s ethnographic research (Wheeler, N.D). However, to date with a few exceptions, hardly any research has reflexively considered the implications of ethnography by VIRs (Wheeler, N.D). Given this scarcity, this research attempts to answer the question: what are the ways to make visually impaired researchers more effective ethnographers? Under this broad question, three distinct, but interrelated sub questions are addressed specifically: what are the protocols of doing ethnography, which VIRs must adopt? What essentials of doing fieldwork a VIR should ensure in order to maintain the credibility of her/his study? What factors should a VIR bear in mind to avoid compromise on the quality of her/his research project?

Specifically, this research intends to achieve four objectives which also summarize its practical and research implications:

- To provide a field-research guide to VIRs based on a first-order experience in different contexts;
- To draw attention towards the provision of effective training in research method courses (at undergraduate and graduate levels) to VIRs on the do’s and don’ts of ethnographic research.
- To sensitize experts in mainstream ethnographic research to consider addressing this issue to benefit a small but a growing audience for their books and articles
- To stimulate further research in this highly innovative and currently neglected area.

Design/methodology/approach:

Instead of claiming to be an exhaustive guide to ethnography for VIRs, this research deals with some practical issues of visual impairment and ethnographic fieldwork. With respect to its structure, it comprises of four elements: (1) A brief literature review on ethnographic fieldwork and its important protocols relevant to this study; (2) A review of the literature on ethnography by visually impaired people; (3) A narrative analysis of two VIRs and their research experiences in the field; (4) A reflexive discussion, being a VIR, drawing on my own research experience from my first ethnographic field work on the study of a marketplace in the Malakand region of Pakistan. The first intervention of this research lasted from July to September (2015) and the final intervention is planned from April to September (2016). The present research focuses on the following issues: (1) Access to the site and initiating the field research; (2) Visual impairment and transit walk: possibility and challenges; (3) Building rapport and maintaining objectivity; (4) How and when to use photographs from the field; (5) Useful technology and its practical, but prudent use in the field; (6) Dealing with the question
of assistant selection, a reflexive diary on her/his influence on the research, and identification of some crucial moments for change.

Findings:

(1) Building rapport with research respondents is facilitated by visual impairment, if the researcher has an awareness and willingness to use it as a strategy for initiating a fruitful interaction.

(2) An audio-video recording device can be used to record the transit walk in the research site (subject to ethical considerations). The video recording can later on be utilized with an audio description in order to make better sense of the environment.

(3) Selection of assistant is important for accessing the site. This allows the VIR a greater degree of independence and objective control over the research intervention. It was found that if not considered appropriately, the assistant may influence the overall quality of the research, and particularly of the field data.

References:


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Members of the Danish MidWest Girls’ Choir and their conductor have the aim of creating a novel expression. As a consequence the girls are experimenting in forming their singing and performance forms. The choir is working on finding an image that is different than traditional church choirs and thereby create the image of ‘choir girls’ as something other than a immobile choir and “well behaved” choir singer. The choir girls are the oldest and most experienced at the Song School and are eager to learn and perform in novel ways which involve their experience and knowledge of singing. Heading towards this uncertain goal of ‘otherness’ require both skills in traditional choir singing and experimenting with knowledge and skills from the discipline of dance. Their rehearsal practice is being formed in continuous dialogue with the choir leader and with the inspiration from both well-established choirs and the discipline of dance. The inspiration from dance skills has both led to a performance form and inspired them in rehearsals to be aware of how their body supports their singing and expression.

“Transformative learning” (Mezirow 1997) in singing communities is seen both as an individual and shared experience. The individual and collective processes of becoming skilled by singing and forming choir performances are analyzed as transformative learning based on social improvisation (Hallam & Ingold 2007). The transformative learning is interrelated to both their skills and practice in being a choir which is striving to become something other than a traditional church choir and to keep their engagement in the choir alive.

The transformative learning process is based on investigating border areas, and a shared drift towards creating and expressing a different kind of rehearsals and choir expressions.

The empirical data from four month anthropological fieldwork on MidWest Girls’ Choir’s rehearsal practices, performances in different contexts and paying and receiving guest visits from recognized church choirs and conductors.

Findings

The processes of becoming skilled as singers and engaged in forming a shared performance marking them as an choir of novelty led to transformative learning in the choir community. Their transformation is both as individual singers and as a social community being formed in ways that inspire the social organization of other choirs. The choir members forms a strong community by sharing the experiences of both learning to become singers, working together as a choir, and in having a shared motivation for performing in novel ways.

Practical implications

Exploration of creative disciplines in forming mixed expressions is both a mean and a goal in exploring new expression forms. You are being formed as a participant and can express aspects which become meaningful – not only to the individual but also to the community as such. The community is thereby both the frame for the learning processes of creating specific performance, and is a way to develop and profile the image of the choir. Members of MidWest Girls’ Choir both learn to sing and perform the singing together, but the learning is transforming their imagination of what a girls’ choir singer and performance could be.
The Promise of Education: Educated Young People and their Troubled Transitions to Work in Rural East Indonesia

Purpose

What does it mean to be educated in an area where relatively few people are educated? Moreover, when job prospects are limited for these educated young people, how does this affect their lives? To answer these questions, I focus on Indonesia. Here, as in many other countries, education plays a major role in contemporary development discourse. Specifically, education contains a promise of national progress, and a promise of personal upward social mobility. Based on ten months of fieldwork in a rural community on the island of Flores (NTT, East Indonesia), I discuss how this promise is constructed in day-to-day life. In particular, I describe young people’s educational trajectories and their return to their rural natal communities upon obtaining a tertiary degree. In these communities, there are limited job opportunities for these educated young people, and they often experience so-called troubled education-to-work transitions upon their return. This paper highlights how a tertiary education, contrary to fulfilling its promise, becomes a contradictory resource. While education empowers young people and their communities to aspire to progress and modernity, it also puts extra pressures on community networks of support, makes young people postpone adulthood and engenders ambivalence towards rural life.

Methodology

Research was conducted by means of a ten month period of participant observation on the Indonesian island of Flores. The researcher was based in a small village (3,000 people) in the rural district of Ngada. Through joining unemployed and underemployed tertiary educated young people (aged 20-30; of both genders) in their daily pursuits, at their homes, and with their families, the researcher’s main data comes from observations, and informal conversations and discussions. Additionally, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with educated young people, their parents, Church leaders and government officials.

Findings

In rural Flores, a tertiary education is an expensive asset, often only obtained through careful planning, hard work, financial offers made by larger networks, and pragmatic arrangements that tie young people firmly into existing community networks of mutual support. Support for young people’s studies is rationalised in terms of an education’s promise of a job and upward social mobility. This implies that educated young people are expected, upon graduation, to become supporting members of the community networks themselves. Thus, the promise of education does not only apply to the individual, but also to the family, and the community at large. However, education’s promise is not realised when educated young people cannot obtain work.

(Social) implications

Troubled education-to-work transitions challenge the assumption that an education contributes to the well-being of society. In fact, they may disturb social networks of support. That is because educated young people cannot contribute to these community networks. Also, due to their troubled transitions, they depend upon these networks longer, increasing pressure on limited resources in relatively poor rural communities. In turn, this dependence, together with prolonged educational trajectories, implies young people postpone marriage, and prolong their youth (i.e. in Indonesia social adulthood comes with marriage, while
marriage comes with financial independence). Moreover, by means of their tertiary degrees, educated young people feel modern. This feeling engenders critiques on networks of mutual help as educated young people consider these as archaic, constraining development. The implied irony of this critique is that these networks not only enabled these young people to study in the first place, but also provide in their livelihoods during their troubled transitions into work. Indeed, education is a contradictory resource. As young people and parents alike are inculcated with ideas of empowerment through their education, not achieving upward social mobility while disturbing networks of reciprocity can have negative effects, such as social exclusion, social pressures and social instability.
Purpose;

This paper examines the theory and practices of entrepreneurship education as it is developing in the Danish context and how they play to the universals of human experience while recognizing that those universals unfold differently in different culture contexts. The experience of being at odds with one's world, or the experience of a “disharmony” is a universal human experience. However, the effort to share one’s personal disharmonies with others, or in the language of Spinoza, Flores & Dreyfus (1997), finding anomalies -- shared cultural issues that fit different people’s personal disharmonies -- requires the reshaping of the disharmony through images and language turning it into a cultural form. The process of then seeking solutions to this cultural problem requires further collaborative work where one must again, in a cultural frame, envision new ways of being to address the shared experience of disharmony. What is the line between the human experience and the cultural frame in this kind of entrepreneurship education? What are different cultural responses to these situations? Why are some cultures more innovative and entrepreneurial, and others less so when dealing with cultural anomalies? These and others are some of the questions this paper seeks to frame.

Design/methodology/approach;

For many educators in the Nordic context, entrepreneurship is seen as an approach to everyday life and not just a practice that is oriented toward the creation of new business ventures (Steyaert and Katz 2004). That approach then looks at the ways individuals experience their personal “disharmonies” and attempts to connect those personal experiences to those of others, creating what the community calls an “anomaly”. The transformation of disharmonies into anomalies sets the stage for the construction of new ways of being that might provide solutions to those problems and change the world that one lives in through a process of social imagination (Spinoza, Flores & Dreyfus 1997). In order to theorize the universal and culturally specific elements of the production of new worlds, the paper draws on ethnographic data from a larger research project seeking to develop a “Culture of Entrepreneurship” in four different national contexts.

Findings;

Findings from two summer courses, one in Denmark and the other in Finland will be used to illustrate some of the different ways that these two cultures approach the universal experiences of disharmony, anomaly, and innovation.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable);

As advanced nations become more and more knowledge societies, creativity is taking on an increasingly important role in the economy and society (Peters 2009). Consequently, higher education needs to focus more on the creative process with an eye toward the creation of new
ways of living. This need is essentially a call to universities to be more entrepreneurial following this more progressive definition of entrepreneurship. Given that different cultures experience the creative process differently, it is important to think about how entrepreneurship education might support the reflective exploration of personal disharmony and their transformation into culturally appropriate solutions.

Practical implications (if applicable);

University pedagogy is still focused around a model of the reproduction of knowledge that was more fitting with an industrial era. This paper provides a potential starting point for educational practice that fits more with the needs of a 21st century knowledge economy.

Social implications (if applicable);

In a world where more and more people are educated, the paper asks what these ideas about entrepreneurship education and the cultures of entrepreneurship might imply for living in a global society that is based in formal education (Baker 2014).
Problematicizing the meaning of “the field(s)” and “doing fieldwork” in educational ethnography

The purpose of this working paper is to problematicize the meaning of “the field(s)” and “doing fieldwork” in educational ethnography. Specifically, we explore the questions:

What constitutes the field(s)?

Is it a physical place? A space? Is it static or dynamic; bound or mobile?

Is it a concept?

When or how is it “entered” or “exited”?

To begin to address these questions, we bring seminal definitions of “the field(s)” and “doing fieldwork” in conversation with concepts from Activity Theory and Complexity Theory. Specifically, we focus on how these theories provide lenses to (re)conceptualize these mainstays of doing educational ethnography.

Activity Theory:

On a very basic level, Activity Theory is defined by the question: What is the individual or group doing in a particular setting? (Wertsch, 1985, p. 211). Underlying this question lies a reconceptualization of the connection between thinking and doing. What humans do is not a result of what they think, and what they think is not a result of what they do. Activity Theory dissolves the Cartesian dualism of mind and body by arguing that thinking is not the product of an action but the action itself. One can further develop Wertsch’s definition by discussing what he means by doing and by setting.

Setting does not refer to the physical environment, but to the sociocultural meanings assigned to the activity by the people involved in the activity. Examples of activities are play, formal education, and work. These appear to be bound by a physical environment, but they are, in fact, the sociocultural interpretation or creation that is imposed on the context by the participant(s) that determines the setting (Wertsch, 1985, p. 203). The context of education activity, for example, is not the building, the curriculum, the teacher, and the students. Within Activity Theory, the context is the sociocultural meanings assigned to these objects and to their relationship to one another.

To understand what Wertsch means by doing, it is important to examine all three levels of Activity Theory: activity, action, and operation. Lantolf and Appel (1994) summarize: The level of motive answers why something is done, the level of goals answers what is done, and the level of operations answers how it is done|| (p. 21).

Complex Adaptive Systems:

Research “fields” can be viewed as complex adaptive systems, ever-evolving networks in which the participants, materials, and environment interact in nonlinear ways (Author et al., 2013). Complexity researchers (e.g., Eoyang & Holladay, 2013) explain that patterns emerge or self-organize from the interactions within a complex system (Eoyang, 2001) and, in turn, constrain the interactions and emergence of subsequent patterns (Author et al., 2013).
There are four interdependent attributes of complex systems (Eyoang & Holladay, 2013) that frame this conceptual view of the “field” or “fields” in educational ethnographic research:

- **Open**—Complex systems are susceptible to influence like public pressure, availability of resources, changing demographics, and so on.
- **Diverse**—Participants are different across many dimensions, e.g., age, gender, language, ethnicity, race, sexual preference, and socio-economic status.
- **Connected**—Parts of the system interact in nonlinear or interdependent; each response influences ongoing interactions.
- **Unpredictable**—Particular actions are not predictable, although patterns emerge over time.

These features resonate with ontological and epistemological assumptions of socio-cultural, neo-Vygotskian approaches. The role of educational ethnographers is to document and interpret patterns emerging from these complex systems, as well as how these emergent patterns constrain the subsequent interactions. The research “field” shifts as various systems become relevant, as they are foregrounded or backgrounded in terms of the researcher’s perspective.

**Design/methodology/approach:**

1. **Review of Seminal Definitions**—descriptions of the field and entry (and exit) of the field

   We begin with a review of seminal literature to develop a historical/methodological understanding of the field(s) as related to ethnography and particular associated methods of doing fieldwork.

2. **Review of recent research**

   We then review journal articles taken from the 2 most recent years of Ethnography and Education and Anthropology and Education to build deeper understandings of how researcher-authors explained the action/activity taking place within the field(s) of research.

3. **Reconceptualizing the field(s)**

   Using our own research with-in Indigenous educational communities, we then compare our understandings of the meaning of field(s) with those constructed from the literature we reviewed. Finally, we attempt to explain these through the lenses of Activity Theory and Complexity Theory to develop a new conceptualization of the field(s) and how actors and actions interact within systems. This will constitute the main body of the paper.

**Findings:**

For this methodological paper instead of traditional findings, we will propose a model to be discussed with session participants.
What’s School Got to Do with It? Comparing Educational Aspirations of Dutch and British white girls from lower socioeconomic backgrounds

Purpose;

A general feature of many educational systems in Europe is tracking next to other forms of ability grouping such as streaming or setting of pupils (Van Houtte and Stevens 2015). These institutional arrangements are important as they determine further education and occupational opportunities (Van Praag et al. 2014).

In the Netherlands, secondary education is organised through tracking where from the age of twelve pupils are separated in three streams: an academic, a middle level or a vocational track. These tracks are hierarchically ordered and they prepare students for different occupational futures. Among the tracks, the vocational track is perceived as the lowest. Moreover, it accommodates the highest number of students from low socio-economic background families. Although most Dutch schools offer all pathways, vocational tracks are often segregated in another building than the main school building. This is in contrast to the UK where there is no formal tracking, but only within-school tracking. This means that students of all abilities are housed in the same school building (Van Houtte and Stevens 2015).

Over the years the Netherlands has received critic on the early tracking which results in highly segregated schools. In this context, Dutch educational experts are looking for ways to improve the institutional arrangements. The Dutch council for secondary education suggests to implement the British secondary education model in which high school exams (GCSE) can be done at different levels for each school subject, instead of taking the exams for all subjects at one level like is the case in the Netherlands (Dutch council for secondary education, 2015).

In this study, based on ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews, I will investigate if and how the Dutch system of early tracking and the British system of within-school tracking influences the educational and occupational aspirations of white female pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The aim is to explore how these pupils develop educational and occupational aspirations within the context of, and their experiences with, school.

Design/methodology/approach;

I combine school observations, semi-structured interviews with pupils and school staff, and consulted various school records. The main fieldwork took place in the Netherlands during the entire school year of 2014-2015. A comparative research which included the same research methods was conducted in England during the summer-term for approximately eight weeks.
In England a state secondary school in a deprived area with excellent results offering a vocational track was selected for this international comparative study on pupils’ aspirations. In the Netherlands a public secondary vocational inner-city school that accommodates a high number of students from low socio-economic background took part in this study.

The English participants consist of ten white British female pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who are in Key Stage 4, Year 10, and age 15 with various educational grades. The Dutch counterparts include ten 15-years-old white native Dutch female pupils from low socio-economic background families in the vocational track at a Dutch secondary inner-city school.

Preliminary findings;

The data indicates that the native Dutch girls in the vocational track of secondary education often have ambitious aspirations that do not correspond directly to their level of education. They experience their perceived low vocational track as restrictive for achieving their aspirations.

The aspirations of the native British girls are mostly related to the previous educational and occupational experiences, failures and struggles of their mother and/or other family members. They view education as an opportunity for upwards mobility. The GCSE results are a determining factor when thinking about future plans. Their plans however, do not necessary include concrete ideal occupations, but were mostly focussed on further education.

References;


Christina Björkenvall Starrost and Jan Gustafsson, University of Gothenburg

From Maine to Penance Town – a policy network ethnography

Purpose;

This paper illustrates an example of how a municipality east of Sweden in their one-to-one computing enactment has become tangled up in a web of policy networks, forming a 1-1 (i.e. one computer per student) policy discursive regime in order to transform the educational practice in schools. These policy changes are being enacted in educational institutions by external IT companies through their implementation of new technology. Our aim is to unpack the policy relations and influences of this implementation by using ethnographic methods and to develop new categories to explain this phenomenon.

The research has been based on network ethnographic research (Ball, 2012; Howard, 2002) in multi-sited field work in relation to 1-1 policy and the emergence and formation of a 1-1 policy discursive regime in Sweden. 1-1 policy is a global movement, where policy communities with many private players and policy actors (national and international IT companies, think tanks and policy intellectuals, National Agency for Education) work beyond national borders and where it is not always clear whose motives or relations form the origins of the networks and communities. Our intention is to develop a deeper understanding of network governance and partnerships, and their propagation of the educational ideas that become objectified knowledge. We do so through two research components. Firstly, we focus on the main idea that has taken root in the municipality’s 1-1 enactment. Secondly, we map the networks, partners and knowledge actors behind the ideas, the so called coordinators, and how their ideas are translated into activities on a local level.

Design/methodology/approach;

Methodologically, Au and Ferrare (2015) and Ball’s (2012) ideas’ about network governance will be used in our network ethnography. Network ethnography could be described as a synergistic research design for the study of the new governance of education. In terms of methodology, network ethnography is a combination of social network analysis and ethnography. It describes and analyzes network governance through which organizational and individual actors create policies, reform movements and practice. Thus, in order to describe the structure of policy networks and communities we have carried out a social network analysis by mapping policies and social relations surrounding the 1-1 policy in making As part of this mapping work we also try to identify knowledge actors and key ideas in this policy network.

The social network analysis was paired with ethnographic observations and interviews in and around the policy network for more than one year. It included teachers, school leaders, principal organizers, politicians and other policy actors. As a result, a 1-1 policy regime’s emergence, formation, and axiomatic being has been identified as has how this ‘being’ has affected the educational practice in schools. The data here include ethnographic observations at policy events, such as both national and international conferences, as well as workshops and other relevant meetings. As a complement to the network ethnography approach we have used Glynos & Howarth’s logics of critical explanation as a framework and theoretical tool to investigate the 1-1 discursive regime further through social logics (e.g. logics of marketization and logics of innovation) and political logics (explaining why the 1-1 policy regime has emerged). The consideration of fantasmatic logics adds an ideological dimension to the
analysis as it explains why the subjects are gripped by this 1-1 policy discourse and what its ‘vector’ of political practices has been (Glynos & Howarth, 2007).

Preliminary findings;

Through network ethnography we have identified the 1-1 policy network structures and social relations in which the municipality is entangled and how a 1-1 policy community has emerged in order to change the local school practice. The ideas are surrounded by a ‘redefinition’ discourse that is taken for granted in which technology is the solution to meet tomorrow’s challenges. Teachers’ and school leaders’ local experiential knowledge takes second place.

We have also identified knowledge actors that play a key role in the policy transformation including the ‘Trojan horse’, or gate opener, for this policy change, which then follows a chain of ideas and events that unfold and strengthen the discursive regime. Finally, we are able to problematize and give example on why subjects become gripped by dominant discourses which in this case has implications on the speed and direction of change.

References


Comparable educational experiences? Exploring everyday practice in distributed medical education

Higher Education in a Digital Economy (HEDE) is a three-year research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The broad aims of the project are to explore issues at one university in Canada surrounding the implementation, from September 2010, of a new medical education curriculum. The delivery of the curriculum distributed across two campuses, which are 400 kilometres apart. This new distributed medical education (DME) curriculum has been designed to rest on information and communication technologies (ICTs) from the ground up. The application of technology (digital video, digital learning platforms, e-learning devices and such like) functions as a means to enact synchronously the DME curriculum across the two campuses. This paper explores the ways in which ICTs are used by teachers and students in their everyday work within technologically rich teaching environments. The paper seeks to contrast dominant, institutional discourses of technology use in higher education teaching with the everyday vernacular practices of staff and students through exploring the ways in which staff and students make sense of their use of ICTs.

HEDE is an institutional ethnography. The vernacular practices of academic staff, technical and administrative staff, and students have been explored through semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations. 30 interviews have been conducted, ranging in length between 45 and 60 minutes. 108 observations have been conducted across both campuses. These were carried out in lecture halls, seminar rooms, staff meeting rooms and technician’s control rooms and lasted for between one and two hours, reflecting the typical length of lectures and seminars in the curriculum. In order to explore the institutional perspective or culture relating to ICT use and then construct an understanding of the dominant, institutional discourses that relate to ICTs we have analysed sixty different institutional documents. These include institutional strategic planning documents, technical documents and specifications, industry reports pertaining to Distributed Medical Education (DME) technologies, and faculty curriculum documents.

The paper concludes that there is a gap between policy and practice in distributed education and that the teaching and learning experience and context of staff and students in different sites need to be analysed in depth, in terms of: whether the experience of learning across sites can be positioned as being comparable; the extent to which technology ameliorates learning and teaching; and understanding the work done by staff, including work with ICTs that is not anticipated within the dominant discourses of the institution.
Franklin Vernon, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Thank you for your daughters: Gender violence and cultures of silence in American higher education

My paper reports on an 18 month ethnography exploring the hidden costs—broadly defined—of higher education in the United States. While embedded within a multi-sited, parallel, comparative team ethnography (Kendall, Vernon, et al., 2015), I focus here on the STEM-oriented campus where I spent approximately two academic years with a group of 15 students from low- and middle-income backgrounds as they navigated through, across, and sometimes out of college settings. Gender, in particular violence to women, was identified from the outset as a defining feature of this campus and students’ meaning-making, and with whether or not college-going was a sustainable project.

The data and analyses put forward in this paper are informed by an 18-month ethnography of the hidden costs of college at a regional STEM campus (that I am referring to as ‘Galena State University’) within the University of Wisconsin system, in the midwestern United States. My work on this campus was part of a larger, parallel comparative team ethnography (Kendall, Vernon, et al., 2015) that occurred simultaneously at multiple campuses throughout the University system, but for this paper I highlight how gender violence was a pervasive fixture at GSU. Informed by critical approaches to educational (e.g., Carspecken, 1996) and institutional (e.g., Engeström, 2001) ethnography, data generated and gathered included jottings and field notes from observations and peripheral participation, interviews, photographs, video, documents, and media screen shots. I began in August of 2014 with a four month institutional ethnography, followed by 14 months in which I incorporated close, relational ethnographies with 15 first-year students from low- and middle-income backgrounds as they navigated the first year and a half after entering college.

Findings

It should come as little surprised that gender violence are a pervasive problem on American college campuses; however, the extent to which it was a commonplace feature of the GSU social and academic experiences, and the campus response to (or complicity in) these, was shocking. From my initiation to GSU—watching as a group of male students placed a large piece of plywood in front of a house on a main road during new student move-in day, with thank you for your daughters written crudely across it in orange spray paint—to my final interview in the study, in which yet another research participant and I sat with the sorrow, anger, and ongoing trauma of her being raped that fall, with the University refusing action, knowing GSU became knowing violence. The major findings explored in this paper are of the institution and its commitments to rural, masculinist culture; of the historic legacy of a male-dominated student body and the rapidly and continuously shrinking female student presence; of the everyday, normalized gender violence women experience—such as cat-calling while walking to class or being targeted at night with laser-pointers from male students’ dorm room windows; and, of how the campus is engaged in an at-best counter-productive project through actively hiding, silencing, and presenting false narratives to the public, such as stating on campus tours that “there are more female students than ever enrolled at GSU” while ignoring that female students are a rapidly shrinking proportion of the overall student population—less than 32% of the most recent incoming class identify as female, and female students have been consistently shrinking as a proportion of the student body for the previous 6 years.
Implications

My primary goal is to provide an accurate, nuanced, and consciousness-raising counter to the isolating narratives ("I thought that only happened to me") and normalized mundanities of violence at GSU. I write at the explicit request of many of the research participants I have spent the last 18 months with, who hope for a chance to stand and be recognized. I write that thorough complications and complexities of female oppressions in this space may open new dialogs here as well as new entry points to recognize and grapple with similarities or alternatives in other educational and cultural-historical settings.
Feedback an instrument for change in educational institutions for relationships between families and schools?

Purpose;

The purpose of this paper is to emphasise the importance of the validity of ethnographic research, beyond the contributions that it can make for researchers. We are referring to the contributions for the participating respondents and our intention is to study investigated communities, focusing on the exchange of information between researchers and those who are researched, in order to advance towards a process of change and transformation in the researched situations. We recognise that in many cases ethnography is described as ideally not trying to influence practice, but there are exceptions and we will identify and discuss these. Our more specific objective is to identify how the ethnographic research process, through feedback, influences the context of the various studied situations regarding the subject of family and school relationships. We are interested in discovering what the experiences of those who are researched are like and interpreting their voices and silences.

Design/methodology/approach;

The paper considers the review and analysis of various ethnographic research studies into education that were carried out in different locations and at different times that emphasise feedback based on terms such as member checks from the staff, peer debriefing, information feed-back and respondent validation. Information feedback will be given particular attention as a question that is raised regularly in the process of ethnographic research in education in relation to the meaning of research for researchers and for those who are researched. We will analyse this from a research perspective that operates critically, in the vision of a truly transformational process for educational practices.

Findings;

Most of the studies reviewed that focus on feedback in ethnographic research are related to the intention to give validity to the research, to triangulate, to focus on the ethical aspects of the research, to address questions of power and of justice. To a lesser extent, these studies have analysed the meaning of validity of research for the participants and for those who are researched. There are few studies that have focused on the process or on the result of feedback regarding the data that researchers give to respondents. Consequently, we have little knowledge about how ethnographic research helps to change researched situations. From this perspective, the paper reflects a synthesis of ethnographic research studies within the field of education that demonstrate this feedback as a topic of interest for the functioning of schools and for the professionalism of teachers.

The reviewed studies show how, on occasions, teachers and families do not consider the contributions that research can offer them and their practices. Only a few research studies address the possible contributions for teachers when they recognise the value of the research and the contributions that feedback has made throughout the process. The meaning of feedback from this perspective not only influences the validity of the method used, but is also an instrument for change.

Practical implications;

The practical implications are related to those who are researched and to those who make decisions. The meaning of ethnographic educational research in global and
local contexts could contribute to a transformation in practices in educational institutions. In addition, the analysis that we present could help politicians in the field of education to understand why schools remain exactly the same as they have always been, despite the well-intentioned efforts made to change them.

Social implications; From a social point of view, the implications of ethnographic educational research are important as an influence on the actions of schools for the development of changes in practices, thereby contributing to a possible transformation in ways of being within the modern global-local context.
“Getting our spirits out”: An interactional ethnography study of cultural memory, personal sense, and the constructed curriculum in Youth Radio and Radio Arts for immigrant youth

This paper analyses the cultural practices that were set in motion during the first days of a Youth Radio program, and how these practices, over time, served as resources to mediate their understanding of the purposes of the program and the development of personal and public “voice.” I pay particular attention to the learning opportunities created with the radio improvisation mentor Guillermo, and how the students’ interpretation and take-up of cultural resources became consequential for their learning and development over time.

The theory-method used for this study combines elements of discourse analysis with ethnography in what Green & Wallat (1981) have called interactional ethnography. Studies that adopt this approach examine how people create meaning through the ways they act and react to each other through the use of language, including verbal and nonverbal semiotic systems with attention to social, cultural, and political processes that are set in motion by, and contextualize, social interaction (Bloome et al., 2005). In this paper I analyze the language and cultural practices that were set in motion during the first days of a high school Youth Radio and Radio Arts program, with 18 students, 5 mentors, and 3 teachers, including myself as participant observer. The analysis examines how the observable curriculum (Castanheira et al., 2001) ¬ not the planned curriculum but what is actually made visible to, and experienced by students ¬¬ is constructed and becomes consequential for student learning over time. Having found “communication” and “voice” to be key themes that were introduced by the radio improv mentor in his first day of teaching, I then identified discourse segments across the year and multiple data sources (audio and video recordings and transcriptions, student media productions, drafts of work, observations in multiple settings, interviews), in which concepts of “voice” and “communication” were elaborated by focal students and adult participants. This allowed me to trace the “roots and routes” of development of these concepts and related productions to the onset of patterns in the first days and select subsequent events (Putney & Green, 2007).

The description of Guillermo’s first day teaching in the program illustrates how ideological values embedded in the group’s discourse set the stage for the emergence of new cultural practices and the development over time of personal and public “voice” among the students. The intertextual and intercontextual links made by Guillermo brought various worlds into the classroom that were not there before, building symbolic bridges to students’ own life worlds (Bloome et al., 2005). I found work on language and cultural memory (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008; Limón, 1994), to be particularly useful in understanding the ways that multilingual discourse practices transformed the temporal and spatial dimensions of the in- and out-of-school contexts for learning.

This research furthers our understanding of how analyses of classroom discourses and practices can provide a crucial link between individual and group learning within cultural, historical, and institutional contexts (Wertsch, 1998).

The larger purpose of this yearlong ethnographic study was to understand how educators might break the cycle of remedial ESL instruction that reproduces the marginalization of working class immigrant youth through its emphasis on low-level skills and narrow
conceptions of language use. This study allows us to see what is possible when teachers, in collaboration with community-based media and arts organizations, shift attention from basic language skills to preparing students to participate in their multiple spheres of experience with agentive identities and powerful language to accomplish personal, social, and civic goals. Creating a protected space for communication and the development of youth voice in this program was achieved through attention to the affective and subjective dimensions of language, language play, and cultural memory beginning on the first days of class. Hybrid discourse practices, the inclusion of Spanish, English, code-switching and other languages and dialects, created affective openings for these students who were otherwise expected to leave their linguistic repertoires and meaning-making resources at the door. For students to engage in the co-construction of a curriculum that creates opportunities for their learning, they must be able to make personal sense of the shared cultural meanings within an educational setting. This paper describes how processes of personal sense making within the collective are set in motion and youth development and learning begins.