

# **Oxford Ethnography and Education Conference 2022**

## **Abstracts**

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## **What Do I Do with Me? Assessing Potential Pitfalls and Perquisites for Researcher Positionality, Knowledge Production, and Possible Epistemic Change from Engagement in Long-Term Immersive Ethnographic Practice**

This paper provides a substantive examination of the potential pitfalls and perquisites that can beset a researcher engaged in long-term immersive ethnographic practice. Here I argue the consequences associated with such a practice could impact the researcher's positionality and consequent knowledge production, as well as prompt surprise epistemic change in the researcher. This confluence of conceptual strands can be seen most vividly in an anecdote recounted in the last paragraph of Alice Goffman's provocative book, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City* (2014). The book was about her six years of spending most every day in a low-income Philadelphia neighborhood trailing a coterie of young black men everywhere, many of whom were avoiding arrest warrants for any manner of crimes. Goffman, raised by a rich white family from an upscale neighborhood of the same city, was attending the University of Pennsylvania. This ethnographic project that became a book began as research for one of her undergraduate courses. On the final page of a discussion on methodology, Goffman tells how after one of the young black men she knew was killed, she jumped in a car with another young black man with a gun. Goffman admits they were in search of the person who had murdered their friend — and that they sought murderous vengeance. In the last few sentences, she acknowledges her long-term immersive ethnographic research afforded her the opportunity to truly understand what could motivate a feeling of vengeance to the point of wanting to commit murder. So, that was a significant, tangible benefit of this type of research method. But she also acknowledged that her epistemic lens had shifted by her long-term immersive experience, thus blurring the lines between what she had long understood to be right or wrong. *That* realization, in retrospect, scared her, which she transparently confessed. I have spent nearly thirty years studying California street gangs. Nineteen of those years I conducted immersive ethnographic research. Knowledge derived from this research serves as the theory-building basis for my thesis, *Culture of the Condemned: A Critique of How Death Row Became a Symbol of Heroism for America's Street-Gang Generation*. My research experience paralleled Alice Goffman's. There were times when I matched the rage levels against the criminal justice system that the black gangsters with whom I was spending so many hours a day felt. At one point I was asked to try to convince a gang leader not to kill the person who had just murdered his sister. This level of trust allowed me to see and hear things that outsiders would never be allowed to access, which was an immense privilege and aid in understanding and theorizing what I witnessed. On the other hand, the challenge was how to position myself in the thesis work and in determining my authentic role: autoethnographer, for instance, or not?

I contend that long-term ethnographic research requires a reflexivity plan that coincides — and thus is ongoing — with the long-term immersive ethnographic experience, as well as thesis writing process, given the scholar's risk of cultural transmutation. Transparency is also a particularly important aspect of

scholarship accompanying this type of immersive research methodology. The reader should know the possible vulnerabilities of the scholar and scholarship.

This work extends ethnographic literature focused on long-term immersive research by identifying some of the epistemic and positioning perils that I argue are inherent to a multi-year immersive exposure by a researcher to a vastly different socioeconomic group and culture. Further, this paper contests much of the literature's power critiques, as found, for example, in Timothy Pachirat's *Among Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power* (2017), where the power is presumed to be primarily in the hands of the researcher. My contention is that the weight of the cultural impact of a long-term immersive research experience shifts the power dynamic toward the dominance of the culture itself, an idea explored in this paper.

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## **Ethnographic mapping of paradigm shifts in Higher Education**

Fieldwork in Academia and higher education mean observing how the context is influenced by powerful paradigms. Currently the dominant paradigm seems to be related to the academic learning context and linked to a process of change directed by the learning outcome paradigm. The paper will focus on the shift in pedagogical paradigms in higher education between the Danish Project Pedagogical (DPP) paradigm from the 1970'es and the Learning Paradigm in the 2000'es. The paper contributes to critical reflections on research methodology and strategies for paradigm analysis. The aim is to map the academic educational context and hereby reconstruct the platform as background for ethnographic analysis of the paradigm shift and its consequences.

The paper is divided in two parts and is based on comprehensive fieldwork referring to the authors' studies at the Danish reform universities in Aalborg (Borgnakke 1996), Roskilde and Copenhagen Business School (Christensen 2013).

The first part is inspired by Thomas Kuhn's concepts sketching the elements in DPP. This is followed by analyses of three of the paradigm typical issues: 1) the teacher as supervisor; 2) the independent project work; 3) student's learning strategies. The elements will be discussed and exemplified by empirical findings.

The second part is inspired by Michel Foucault's genealogy and will focus on small group learning as part of DPP. This means tracing the concept of groups in project studies back to its Herkunft identifying three 'sources': progressive pedagogy, social psychology and critical (Marxist) pedagogy. In this process, certain elements will be identified and problematized: 1) the tabooed group-leadership; 2) competition among students; 3) focus-shift from process to product. This will be exemplified by empirical findings.

The paper sketches a Kuhn- and Foucault-inspired strategy for ethnographic paradigm mapping and analyses. Further the paper summarizes empirical findings of potentials and pitfalls of the Project Pedagogical-paradigm anno 2022. The discussion is performed as a post-Corona confrontation with the learning outcome paradigm and the current critique of consequences of decades ruled by OECD policy and the Bologna process deposits.

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## **My dog and I: an autoethnographical reflection on the clash between different ambitions and needs within an asymmetric relationship**

Through an autoethnographical reflection the aim of this paper is to explore the clash between high ethical ambitions in educative relationships and demanding behaviours. What happens when the map does not resemble reality, when, for example, someone in the educative relation does not behave as expected and the methods are challenged? What increases or decreases the risk that the teacher (or similar) will act contrary to her or his convictions?

The background to this autoethnographical, substantive paper, goes like this:

Inspired of Donna Haraway's (2003, 2008) writings about her relation with the Australian shepherd Cayenne, I last fall expanded my family with a miniature American Shepherd. I wanted to call her Kajan, as a Swedish wink to Haraway's Cayenne, but my daughters said no. In the end – and after long and intensive deliberations – we all agreed on the name Lyra after the main character in Philip Pullmans His Dark Materials (1995, 1997, 2000). Lyra has turned out to be a well-chosen name. This small, blue-eyed beautiful miniature version of the Australian shepherd has really brought some dark materials into our home and into my mind.

My last dog Lissie, born 2011, gave me already as a puppy a life changing experience of alternative ways of being in the world with a different species. This led, among other things, to a doctoral dissertation in educational sciences, in which I with ethnographical methods explore the paradigmatic shift that has occurred in parts of the dog-training world. Older methods built on domination and punishment, have been challenged and out dated by methods built on care, willingness to see the world from the perspective of the other, positive reinforcement and companionship (Bosseldal, 2019).

With Lyra, I dreamed about building a perfect companionship from the beginning, built on what Haraway (2008) calls significant otherness. I intended to do this by seeing the world from Lyras perspective, protect her from failures and use only decent training methods where her voice could be heard. This has turned out to be much more difficult than I predicted. Lyra, my beloved dark material, has much more of significant otherness than I was able (or experienced) to foresee.

As far as I can understand, Lyra is interested in a companionship with me. But her perspectives and reactions on the world, differs dramatically from mine. This has been really challenging. I have some days failed to be the decent partner I intended to be. I have also met other people, especially other dog trainers, that has questioned my methods and mocked my ambitions. They have not been interested at all, in seeing the world from the eyes of Lyra and this has left me sad, anxious and angry. It is these experiences that I want to dig deeper into with the autobiographical methodology.

The relation between me and Lyra, and the clash between my ethical ambitions about otherness in connection and the explosive and reactive little puppy together with the dog trainers and others that question both my methods and ambitions and are willing to attack Lyra where she is as most vulnerable, is a unique experience, well suited for autoethnographical design. The paper will contribute to the autoethnographical field by connecting it to the self-study methodology (see below) and by using it to explore something that is difficult to grasp with more common ethnographical (or other) methods: namely the teachers/trainers ongoing reflection and inner monologue when trying to realize an educative ambition and especially when this realisation meets resistance and/or unexpected and demanding behaviours from both students and colleagues.

There are a few other examples in the field of human-animal-relationship-studies where researchers have used autoethnography (see for example Tulloch 2016, Zetterquist Blokhuis 2018, Hagström 2018, Lee 2019). The rich tradition of self-studies in the field of teacher education also connects to this. Like the self study-researchers, my focus lie on the self (myself) in action, in an educational context (Hauge, 2020).

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**Becoming friends with the teacher in ‘The Field’: practical, epistemic, and ethical tensions and rewards in the context of ethnographic research in low-income schools in South Africa.**

What constitutes an ‘appropriate’ relationship with ethnographic research participants is the subject of an extensive and highly moralising literature. Traditionally, young ethnographers have been warned against the dangers of ‘going native,’ referring to the tendency of becoming fully fledged members of a community under study at the expense of their research. In contrast, more recent decolonisation movements have sought to question the researcher-participant distinction entirely, and instead have promoted the use of ‘non-extractive’ and co-produced methods. When it comes to classroom-based education research, this tension concerns primarily the nature of the divide between the ethnographer (researcher) and the teacher (participant). While many scholars have sought to overcome this tension through codesigned action-research projects, these projects take place almost entirely in the Global North. This is notable, given that the tensions associated with the ethnographer/teacher divide are arguably exacerbated in the context of research projects undertaken by “privileged outsiders” in the Global South. Furthermore, the literature on researcher-participant partnerships has paid much less attention to the incremental and iterative collaborations between ethnographers and teachers. These collaborations - which emerge spontaneously and are underpinned by affective ties - are arguably the most common form of education research partnership. In this paper, we unpack the role of friendships with teachers as a method for conducting classroom ethnographies. Drawing on more than 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork in low-income schools in Johannesburg and Cape Town, we reflect on the practical, epistemic and ethical tensions and rewards associated with such friendships. We furthermore reflect on the implications of friendship for non-extractive methods.

This paper makes the following arguments:

1. We argue that friendship should be critically apprehended as an ethnographic method, which mediates every stage of the research process from access to dissemination. Furthermore, friendship with teachers in the context of research structured by a Global North/South divide offers essential perspectives on data collection, data analysis and ethnographic writing which otherwise remain inaccessible.
2. We suggest that a consideration of friendship is often lacking from literature on decolonising ethnographic methods, and from literature on collaborative research with teachers. Yet a consideration of friendship may challenge (or nuance) the metaphor of extraction when it comes to data collection.

3. We demonstrate the value of the school – a space of learning, knowledge production and transmission; with its diverse and hierarchical forms of reciprocity; and its strong concern for duty of care – as an important field site to think about the institutional mediation of friendships, the blurring of the researcher/participant boundaries, and collaborative/co-produced research.
4. We stress that the development of these friendships is limited by the social inequalities and structural violence associated with the gap between the backgrounds of teachers and researchers.

This paper contributes to education and ethnography in four ways. First, it explores the role of friendship in the specific context of the school as a fieldsite. Second, it explores the role of friendships that emerged while in the field, across large hierarchical divides. Third, it explores the impact of friendship on the research process after data collection has already taken place, once the researcher has already left the fieldsite. Fourth, it reflects on the role of friendship in light of recent calls to decolonise ethnographic research methods.

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## **Finding your place – the normalcy of making normalcy in inclusive middle school classrooms: an ethnographic enquiry**

Inclusive education can be understood as the promise to secure “education for all” (Lindmeier & Lütje-Klose, 2015) – especially for students from social groups traditionally marginalised and discriminated against in the German school system. In this context, “social inclusion” (Koster, Nakken, Pijl, & Van Houten, 2009) means enabling all students to establish and secure a sense of belonging and connectedness with the class group as central social entity (Rabenstein, Idel, Reh, & Ricken, 2018). For students starting out in Middle school, (usually) transitioning from primary school to a new school and to a new class group, this throws up the question: how can I find my place her - and thus secure a sense of belonging afforded by being able to claim normalcy?

Grounded in rich ethnographic data, this substantive paper explores the normalcy of (making) normalcy in inclusive secondary schools. That is, by (1) unfolding which rules social interactions follow and thus create a sense of normalcy (Goffman, 1968; Misztal, 2015), this chapter explores (2) how, from a structural point of view, normalcy and deviance are manufactured (Link, 2006) to (de-) legitimise which student subjects can achieve belonging in everyday inclusive school interactions.

Drawing on data from participant observation in four inclusive secondary classrooms, document analysis and interviews with students and teachers at the two German schools studied over the course of one school term, this paper will focus on the complex social world of peer interactions. Here, students at the beginning of secondary school are faced with the task to find their place in the class group and thus secure their (sense of) belonging. I will show that in these schools, the mandate to be a “school for all” means that all students – irrespective of dis/ability, gender or ethnic background - find that their belonging is formally assured. Drawing on data from class council meetings, school events and everyday classroom interactions, I will show, however, that social belonging must be struggled for by students – and sometimes fails, leading to social exclusion.

Given the focus of extant empirical research in inclusive education on (a) primary school and (b) the perspectives of teaching staff, I provide empirical data and analysis on inclusive education at secondary level, especially in regards to “social inclusion”. Contributing to (inclusive) education and disability studies in education through rich ethnographic empirical data, this paper explores normalcy and its making – and how it can be researched ethnographically. I will demonstrate the continued usefulness of Goffman’s notion of normalcy for ethnography while connecting it with a more macro-level analysis of normalcy as a structural category undergirding who can and cannot claim legitimate belonging in inclusive schools.

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### **Extra-curricular activities and inequality in higher education: A study of Delhi University**

As universities across the world are opening their doors to historically underrepresented groups, differentiation through gatekeeping access is not the only mechanism through which higher educational institutions reproduce inequality. Alongside, there is a growing need to understand practices of differentiation inside higher educational institutions (Deshpande 2020, Stuber 2009). I consider these practices as they emerge in the realm of extra-curricular activities at an elite university in India, which I call National University (NU). I ask: how do dominant discourses and routinized practices in the context of extra-curricular activities shape inequality at the university? I answer this question using ethnographic observations (16 months) of student-run clubs, which organize extra-curricular activities at NU. I complement these observations with in-depth interviews (50) with students both in and outside these clubs. I find that extra-curricular activities shape inequality through their exclusivity. In the first part of my paper, I demonstrate how the demands on time and prior participation in extra-curricular activities turns clubs into relatively homogenous social spaces. This ultimately silos students' social ties. In the second part of the paper, I discuss two key implications of homogenous social ties as they emerge in these clubs. First, I suggest that when students with resource-rich social ties group with others who are privileged like themselves, they consolidate their social capital. Second, I show that when privileged students are not forced to encounter difference – and thus see their social locations as such – it reinforces imaginaries about the social worlds that ultimately serve to reproduce inequality.

Barring key exceptions (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013, Stuber 2009), scholarship on higher educational inequality largely focuses on questions of academic engagement. My work refocuses attention from academics to students' social lives through a study of extra-curricular activities. It also offers a novel lens into this realm: while most work on extra-curricular engagement accurately highlights the role of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) in deciding who participates and succeeds, I examine these spaces for their “unanticipated gains” (Small 2013) in cementing social ties. In doing so, I contribute to ethnographies of education that demonstrate that inequities are better understood through the embodied actions, dominant discourses, and routinized practices that create horizontal differentiation among students inside educational institutions.

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## **Reclaiming an Ethnographic Ancestor: The Methodological Contributions of Harriet Martineau**

This paper sets out to claim a place for one of ethnography's founding figures. Not long after Alex De Tocqueville's famous visit to the United States, another traveller - a thin woman with a large ear trumpet - crossed the Atlantic and spent two and a half years exploring the new nation. The woman was Harriet Martineau. She compiled her impressions in *Society in America* (1837); a controversial book on both sides of the ocean, which extolled democracy and condemned slavery. On the voyage back to England, she began writing a companion volume to explain her methodological approach. This was called *How to Observe Manners and Morals*, and was published in 1838.

I will draw on this work to show how Martineau foreshadowed Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber in emphasizing *verstehen*, or understanding, in social research over the kinds of explanations used in the physical sciences. She also foreshadowed the systematic attention to social institutions outlined in the Royal Anthropological Society's fieldwork handbook, *Notes and Queries*, whose first edition came out in 1874.

Europe in the 1830s and 1840s saw an extraordinary amount of foundational work in social research, and Martineau played a part in this. *How to Observe Manners and Morals* articulated ideas that are still central to ethnography, including participant observation, dialogue, cultural relativism and acknowledgment of diverse social conditions. She was a popular author whose work outsold that of Charles Dickens. But while competing strands of early nineteenth century thought are accepted as part of the methodological canon – like Auguste Comte's lectures on Positivism and Sociology and Adolphe Quetelet's ideas on "social physics" and statistics - Martineau has been largely forgotten.

This paper will briefly introduce Martineau's life, and then go on to describe her contributions to ethnography in *How to Observe Manners and Morals*. I will note her systematic attention to government, religion, status hierarchies, economics, physical environment, the arts and family structures. I will discuss her emphasis on participation and dialogue, her distinction between cultural and moral relativism and her caveats about what we now refer to as ethnocentrism. I will look at her writing on enslaved people, white settlers, Native Americans and different groups of women. Finally I will consider her concept of "sympathy", which is closer to our current word "empathy."

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## **Implementation of language-sensitive teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic**

As an overall social reality, multilingual language references are reflected in the classroom as well (Mecheril, 2016, p. 17f.). Based on this, in Germany, various didactic concepts pursue the goal of targeted language support for German, including the approach of “language-sensitive teaching” (Prediger, 2020). It is intended as a contribution to the promotion of educational equity; however, the monolingual focus on German as language of education can be discussed critically (Dirim, 2010).

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, practices of language-sensitive teaching had to be transferred ad hoc to the digital space. At the same time, negative effects of distance learning on the (educational) linguistic situation of — especially multilingual and/or socially disadvantaged — students have been widely discussed in the media as well as politically and pedagogically.

Against this backdrop, the contribution asks how language-sensitive teaching has been implemented in both face-to-face and digital lessons in schools in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of particular interest is how teachers perceived the linguistic situation of students as well as possibilities of their active language support and education during this period. The data basis is provided by ethnographical classroom observations and group discussions with teachers and school principals at secondary schools and vocational schools in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods in North Rhine-Westphalia, that were conducted in the school year 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The preliminary findings suggest that teachers were often eager to continue language-sensitive teaching in the digital space. At the same time, they complain that they have not reached all their students with distance learning because some of the latter ‘submerged’. Here, the (re)addressing of (linguistic) difference and (linguistic) deficits of these students often became apparent.

Educational ethnography can help to track and trace the challenge of established routines and pedagogical practices in situ. It can capture how pupils are addressed and produced as subjects in terms of their linguistic abilities. Last but not least, educational ethnography has the potential to show the tensions between claims and contradictions of a diversity-oriented, difference-sensitive education in times of crisis.

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## **What's An Educational Ethnographer to Do: Schools Under Attack**

The purpose of this methodological paper is to explore the roles and responsibilities of educational ethnographers in public educational debates. The paper draws on my long ethnographic engagement with an LGBTQ+ community organization juxtaposed with current U.S. legal policies aimed at limiting the rights of LGBTQ+ youth and their families in public school settings. The question this paper asks is “What’s an educational ethnographer to do with their ethnographic findings in public milieu?” The paper situates the educational ethnographer as a public scholar capable of serving multiple publics. Without presenting conclusions, the paper hopes to raise questions and conversations relevant to the enacting the ‘what next’ of ethnographic findings.

The author has been ethnographically engaged with LGBTQ+ youth who have enacted educational trainings aimed at securing affirming and relevant educational opportunities in support of their thrivance. Those findings speak an oppositional perspective into the contemporary U.S. policy debates. For example, the state of Florida has passed legislation disallowing the use of the word “gay” in public schools while our study clearly indicates that teachers use of LGBTQ+ examples were affirming and encouraged them as learners. This very specific ethnographic example is used to explore the larger questions around educational ethnographers speaking into policy debates and the history of educational ethnography informing public policy.

Contemporary U.S. policies and policy deliberations set the stage for harmful educational practices. How is that long productive ethnographic studies can and/or should inform the policy considerations? Drawing on years of ethnographic work with LGBTQ+ youth, this ethnographer feels like a bystander in a bullying event. Seeking a way to marshal the knowledge and insights obtained through ethnographic endeavors, while minimizing potential damage, the author puts her own experiences into dialogue with Clemens and Tierney’s (2020) claim that ethnography can improve policy designs. Rather than situating one’s work directly as policy ethnography in the tradition, for example of Bradley Levinson (see Levinson, Winstead & Sutton, 2020), this paper explores the question of what to do with findings that have the capacity to speak directly to policy in the making. What would it mean to be a public scholar of educational ethnography?



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Do no harm: avoiding 'damage' focussed ethnographical research in education through a strengths-based approach.

This paper considers the emerging findings in an ethnographic project in a secondary school in an ethnically diverse community in the north of England and discusses the implications for the theory and methodologies of a strengths-based approach.

The research focus is on young people from ethnically diverse marginalised communities who are often problematised and their culture is seen as the root of their educational failure. This deficit model renders low achievement effectively "their fault" (Yosso, 2005:6) rather than a failure of the education system (Ladson-Billings, 1994). This contributes to the significant inequalities in education and structural racism is deeply embedded in schools in the UK (Runnymede Trust, 2020).

The research uses a CRT framework and applies theories of cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and what Wallace (2018) describes as a 'constellation of capitals' to understand how the knowledge, skills and experiences of communities can be reflected in classroom learning. I draw on the work of Tuck and Yang (2014) on 'refusal', and Tuck's (2009) work on avoiding 'damage' focussed research, which challenges research to avoid further problematising communities and explicitly or implicitly portraying them as devoid of capability, instead to focus on 'desire' based research which focusses on developing the potential for positive change. The research builds on previous strengths-based research with the Roma Sloak community (Doyle, 2021).

I will discuss emerging findings and reflections from the current research project on how fieldwork methodology, methods, and areas of focus can develop a strengths-based approach, and this includes:

- i. Methods: Focus of time and practice in communities, parents, students, and staff. How can a presence of positivity can be maintained by the researcher during data collection?
- ii. Descriptions in the field: by school staff of increasing 'need', more 'safeguarding' issues, and a focus on 'mental health' and 'trauma informed practice'. Avoiding the temptation for the researcher to be drawn solely to institutional discourse.
- iii. The selection of participants: the temptation for the researcher to be drawn to those perceived to have problems, or complex life stories, with the promise of rich data.
- iv. The 'desire' that Tuck (2009) refers to: How does the presence of the research and researcher add benefit to the experiences of the communities?

After the research is over what is the legacy and how can this be built into the research?

- v. How to involve the participants: including students, families, and wider community whilst keeping the focus on the institutions and structures. How to ensure a positive voice of the participant as central to the research without compromising the need to challenge structural and institutional disadvantage?

The findings have implications for how we utilise ethnographic methodologies and methods and how research can build on the strengths of communities and avoid a damage focussed approach that risks further problematising the communities that are the focus of the research. It will inform future research considerations at methodological and practice levels.

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### **Navigating the shifting research site: Two researchers' experiences of ethnographic research in schools during the covid-19 pandemic.**

This paper explores the experiences and challenges of two new doctoral researchers employing ethnographic research in secondary schools over 18 months during the time of the global pandemic. The paper will examine how ethnographic methodologies can adapt to researching during circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic whilst maintaining the integrity of the values of ethnography.

The impact of covid-19 on schools, students and communities has been significant and unprecedented. While it is generally accepted that the nature of ethnographic research means it can adapt to 'work around' situations such as this, we have found through the restructuring of our research activities that we have unique experiences that shed light on ethnography in the educational field.

Ethnographic sites tend to be seen as a stable and often unchanging (or slow changing) environments that are set within a relatively stable context in which a researcher can spend getting to know their space and those involved in the research process. However, the ever-shifting sands of the global pandemic means that within schools in the UK there has been an inherent lack of stability for staff, students, and communities involved, and for researchers who may be exploring these sites. With Covid-19's unplanned beginning, extended middle, and currently no fixed end, the proposed methodologies of each researcher have needed to adapt quickly and constantly. This created a sense of dissonance for us as researchers between our plans and intentions and what was, and still is, happening in the field. It goes beyond a sense of uncertainty and expectations of the 'flexible' ethnographer. We have often found it difficult to get a hold on any fixed points or context to enable an understanding of the culture, community, and operations of the schools and how this links back to our research questions.

Conducting research in this context has been insightful but has raised questions about the extent to which ethnographic research can be conducted in a time such a global pandemic. Researchers' engagement with uncertain fieldwork conditions has implications for, for example, any familiarisation phase, ethical issues including informed consent, appropriate time in the field, and researcher reflexivity. Based on our experiences of the field since March 2020, this paper will inform understandings of the way in which ethnography can be appropriate to covid and covid like contexts now and in the future.

The paper provides much needed reflection on the impact of covid on research with our communities. The findings have implications for how we utilise ethnographic methodologies and methods. It sheds light on the experiences and challenges of conducting ethnographic experience in educational settings during the time of a global pandemic. It will help inform others about researching during such an uncertain time but will also have some implications on methodological choices for other researchers in the future who may not be affected by Covid in the same way, but who can learn more about ethnographic methodologies from this process. It will inform future research considerations at methodological and practice levels.

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### **The impact of digitalization on the educational environment: ethnographic research in Turkey**

The Turkish Ministry of National Education has created a central Education Information Network (EIN) and has made all digitized teaching and education content accessible at the national level through this network since 2012. However, the format and frequency of use of digital content varies in different schools and even classrooms within the same school. Therefore, education in Turkey provides a rich environment for ethnographic research of the socio-culturalism brought about by digitalization.

This ethnographic research aims to examine the effect of socio-culturalism created by digitalization in the educational environment on the role of the teacher and the student-teacher relationship. More specifically, this study addresses the following questions: While the digitalization of educational content enables knowledge to be learned from the machine, this process shape student's view of knowledge, knowledge sources and their teachers? Why do teachers and students continue to use traditional learning methods despite the availability of digital information resources? Does openness to and the use of digital content within the classes vary by the level of academic achievement of students and schools? Data were collected utilizing multiple qualitative methods including participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews. A total of eight classes from four high schools in Fatih district of Istanbul were observed over the course of one semester. Schools and classes were diverse in terms of the use of digital content within the courses as well as the level of academic achievement. After the observations, forty students drawn from these classes and their teachers were interviewed.

Findings show that the most important digital instruments used for education are smartboards in the classrooms and the digital content of the EIN, as well as the smartphones that each student has. Students tend to use open internet resources as a knowledge resource instead of books or -often- consulting their teachers.

Our analyses also indicate that students refer to a limited number of open internet resources for their homework. When this situation is evaluated together with the EIN, it can be said that digitalization standardizes educational information.

Findings also suggest that teachers are no longer seen as a source of information for students and that their role in the classroom has evolved towards being a “facilitator”. Despite this, students do not want to give up on their teachers, especially emotionally.

Despite the increase in research findings which show that educational technologies support student-centered learning and active learning, the findings of this study

suggest that various socio-cultural factors might influence whether these outcomes are realized in the classroom. This ethnographic study explores some socio-cultural elements of the educational environment and shows how digitalization in education affects teachers with different teaching styles in their relationships with their students. Observing and understanding the actors of educational activity in their own environment is necessary for the accumulation of data necessary for the development of theories about the changing position of the teacher and the impact of the digitalization of knowledge on mass education. This study contributes to the accumulation of data on such theoretical developments.

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### **Creative and inclusive practices through the use of digital media: an ethnographic research project**

The main purpose of this paper is to develop knowledge on the use of digital media for promoting creative and inclusive practices in particular challenging educational contexts. An ethnographic research is carried out in a school with a racial and cultural diverse context in a suburban area in north-east Italy. The specific aim is to explore how teachers introduce digital tools in their lessons to foster creativity and inclusion. This study understands ethnography as social research focused on actions and routines which make sense of the world in everyday life (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1994). Within this background, daily life at this school is explored from the deeply inside in naturally occurring settings (Hammersley, 2018) such as the classroom or the playground. Participant observation, informal conversations, a research diary, filmed-interviews, and audio-recording are the methods used by the researcher to collect information. It is mainly collected during school time but not limited to it. The analysis of the information includes an inductive analysis with qualitative interpretation of meaning (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2019).

Participant observation takes place over six weeks. Related to the time spend in the school by the researcher; it is full time the first week and, after that, the rest of the weeks three days per week. The last week is another full time week to provide feedback to the teachers and to film the interviews. Findings are still being updated, but the primary hypothesis states that working with digital tools promotes creative practices in schools with challenging contexts and helps to promote inclusive education. Systematic activities that favor “expression, problem-solving and communication” are considered as tasks that promote creative development (Vigo and Soriano, 2014, p.266). The meanings that students and teachers give to the products developed with digital tools are being explored from a cultural and holistic perspective (Hammersley, 2018), noticing the potential of these practices to normalize diversity and to encourage the understanding between students.

In a digital era in which children and adults are constantly exposed to technology, it seems adequate to conduct research about the possibilities of digital practices in challenging school areas and how these practices may contribute to promote creativity and inclusion.

Research advocates pursuing inclusion inside the classroom as a way towards social and democratic justice (Slee 2011; Beach, 2017; Vigo and Dieste, 2017; Ainscow, 2020). Hence, this ethnographic research is of interest as it aims to contribute to the development of knowledge about the practices and dynamics that promote the participation of every student in the classroom, taking into account their individual characteristics and therefore, promoting inclusive education, through the use of digital media. The researcher carries out participant observation inside the school in a systematic and non-intrusive way (Taylor and Bogdan, 2008), having the opportunity to explore different kinds of interactions between the teachers and the students and contributing to social knowledge about research *in situ* and ethnography.

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## **The Lion's Mouth Opens: Using Comics-Based Data Analysis Methods in Ethnography**

The visual arts are popular among arts-based ethnographers, who employ a range of visual methods for data gathering, analyses and presentation/dissemination of findings. However, more often than not, the visual arts are seen as merely the end products, or representational objects, reflecting study findings, rather than part of a complex process of data analysis, researcher reflection and deep analytic engagement. This gives short shrift to the power of image work as an analytic tool in arts-based ethnographic research. As the author found in her own work as a comic artist and ethnographer, it is often in the act of working through data and fieldwork experiences through writing and drawing that facilitates a deeper and more nuanced engagement with the data itself. This paper will begin with an overview of selected exemplars of comics-based research (CBR) in ethnography. This will be followed by a discussion of one of the author's own arts-based ethnography projects. This project involved young transgender children and their families immediately following the 2016 US presidential election and incorporated both data gathering and data analysis via CBR. By writing a series of short comic memos and longer reflective comic narratives meditating on categories and themes from the data, the researcher was able to shape her own understanding of participant experience, rather than simply reflect it. Closing discussion includes implications for aesthetic standards in visual and arts-based methods writ large, issues of representation, and possibilities for and politics of dissemination of findings to new and diverse publics.

Comics-based research methods present challenges, especially in analyzing ethnographic data, and the work is not without ethical concerns. However, this method may offer unique advantages for grappling with ethnographic data in particular.

Storytelling can be a transformative process however it is done, and the comic artist's process of "retorying" in CBR (Kuttner, Sousanis & Weaver-Hightower, 2018) offer particular analytic power: "narrative, perhaps especially including comics, gives access to empathy and insight into experience that resides centrally in the aims of ethnographic research" (Weaver-Hightower, 2017, p. 229)

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### **Educational Exclusion As A Labour Of Sisyphus. Experiencing The Eternal Return Of A Limited Strategy To Ensure The Right To Education.**

School failure and early school leaving (ESL) are well-known problems in education system (Gudmundsson, 2013; Öhrn, 2011; Van Praag, 2021). In Spain become a major issue and a distinctive feature (Fernández, 2010). With the aim of tackling ESL, Spanish education authorities have implemented so-called diversification measures with a compensatory perspective, within compulsory and post-compulsory education (Miñaca, 2013; Tarabini, 2015; Fera-Viceo, 2017). Some of these post-compulsory diversification measures have showed their capacity to offer an alternative to those students who didn't get their graduation diploma after compulsory secondary education, as Initial Vocational Programs (PCI, in Spanish), and attract them (García-Goncet, 2018). At the same time, these post-compulsory diversification measures have showed their limits to encourage students to develop advanced professional and/or academic itineraries (Moretin-Encina, 2021). As result, PCI have become in a sort of a deadend road where students can't easily find a pathway to continue their progression in the education system. Consequently, students can get trapped in PCI programs.

With this in mind, we may ask about how PCI's students experience these programs and about PCI's real aims. Following Willis' consideration of culture as mediating role (1981), our study aims to critically expose and explore students' common values and beliefs related to their own disadvantaged situation and to their opportunities for change. Indeed, this contribution attempt to understand different meanings given by a group of 15 students to their own academic and training experiences after to piled up, at least, their second or third PCI program. Research process was carried out through critical ethnography (Beach, 2020; Vigo-Arrazola, 2021) during two academic years in a natural situation (Hammersley, [1983] 2007), giving my initial position as regular teacher of the group. However, last year, I switched from teacher to researcher, so I paid special attention to recognize my own position (Smyth, 2006; Vanner, 2015). Indeed, research process was enriched by challenges and advantages of being a field researcher in a familiar context (Gelir, 2021; Wegener, 2014; Zulfikar, 2014) and involved participant observations, interviews, informal conversations and document analysis.

After a long time inside the education system receiving a poor image of themselves, the shared idea, in terms of professional and academic aspirations, is that they're not able to develop an upward trajectory. On the contrary, many of them accepted their situation and considered fair to stay at the same low educational level. As far they concerned, to be able to choose from different PCI specializations was good enough: common educational and training progression was replaced by the opportunity to follow some initial vocational training programs. So, while they were waiting for a job opportunity, they were equipped with some more basic professional skills which could be useful at some point. Work appeared as bridge to real adult autonomy and independence. However, real student's expectations to achieve a job were very low, so remaining in education was the shared vision for most of them.

Those who had an initial working experience were a little more optimistic. After all the critical process followed, students started to recognize their right to education and decided strategically among different PCI, trying to achieve a number of some PCI certificates to aim an official diploma. The whole experience in PCI was evaluated the very positive by many students, and they stressed the importance of relationships that they had there and the value of education as way to become part of something bigger.

In a socioeconomic context ruled by capitalist values (Milanovic, 2019) and with strong sense of individualistic competition (Smyth, 2014), PCI seems to be a limited strategy to ensure the right to education of vulnerable students. Following to Dovemark & Beach (2015), we found a new perspective moving from learning to labour, to learning for precarity. Despite this, students raised awareness about their right to education, and they empowered to act in a different way (Lucio-Villegas, 2015). Critical ethnography was useful to promote conscientization: on one hand, common student's values and beliefs surfaced and become the subjects (Vigo-Arrazola, 2019); on the other hand, researcher never accepted marginalization as inevitable fact or something dependent on the faults of the marginalized and oppressed people (Beach, 2017). Finally, critical ethnography reinforces the consideration of education as political issue (Freire, 1994) which demands a deep understanding of the context and of the community where is located.

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### **Getting lost in research. Three triggering events of a new materialist inquiry in ethnography.**

In recent years, our transitions as a community have led us to question ourselves about the conventionalisms of a type of qualitative research that is disciplined, regulated and standardised by the orthodoxy of hegemonic positivism in education (Correa et al., 2020; St. Pierre, 2011). We pause to think not only about the role of theory, evidence of experience, or method, but also about the political sense of educational research in addressing values linked to social justice or inclusion. In our latest project related to the learning trajectories of young university students (PID2019-108696RB-I00), which we develop using an ethnographic approach, we once again put on hold many of the certainties that had accompanied us as researchers. Some of these could be considered the legacy of a humanist tradition in educational research, from which we are gradually distancing ourselves more and more. In part, due to the thinking of a whole series of authors framed within the post-humanist currents (Barad, 2003; Braidotti, 2018; Koro, 2022; Lather, 1992, 2009) who have come to accompany our way of doing and positioning ourselves in the face of the uncertainty posed by contemporary socio-educational reality. And who, moreover, contribute not only to our understanding of the type of approach that the materialist turn in research entails, but also some of the crises related to voice, experience and authenticity, the crisis of identity and agency, as well as the crisis of representation and its methods (Hernando-Lloréns, 2021). For all these reasons, this text proposes a methodological reflection based on the questions that precipitated three events during the relationship that we maintained with our participants during the research process. In this way, it allows us to embody and continue thinking about the different crises that postfoundational and postcolonial feminist currents in educational research have been pointing to.

By way of questions, we will formulate three of the multiple tensions that arose in our ethnographic approach to the learning trajectories of young university students. Three questions that we interpret as triggers to help us continue to problematise the perspective on which the humanist vision in research is based, and to which we provide a tentative and provisional response.

1. The crisis of voice, experience and authenticity. When we decided to approach interviewing young university students for the purpose of mapping "the voice of young people", we asked ourselves: Who is really speaking? What kind of discourses or regimes of truth shape their discourses? Are the accounts of our participants the answers to our questions or the beginning of our research?
2. The crisis of representation and its methods. How can we ensure that our collection methods do not continue to reproduce the same inequalities as traditional humanist approaches in the social sciences? What construction of reality do we favour in the use of certain methods? Is the "evidence of experience" (Scott, 1991) irrefutable proof of individual experience?
3. The crisis of identity and agency. Starting from the premise that the participant is subject to a series of conditions of existence and action that we facilitate through the methodological decisions we make in our research, what responsibility do our decisions have for producing a new ethical reality that is more just, inclusive and even emancipatory? How is the relationship that we build with the participants during the course of the events contributing to generating different forms of knowledge? Is positioning from a performative ethics (Romm, 2020) contributing to representing reality or is it a potential exercise in constructing it?

We decided to stop and think about different onto-ethical-epistemological crises that emerge in contemporary qualitative research from tensions linked to our practice as researchers. This kind of reflections push us to assume the metaphor proposed by Lather (2009) of getting lost in our ethnographic approaches to research, as a theoretical and methodological orientation. This allows us not only to deconstruct but also to problematise the epistemic limits of our own research approaches, which sometimes lead to exclusionary and colonial ways of producing knowledge.

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## **Exploring the Learning Experiences of Women of Color (WoC) in STEM**

This study seeks to explore the learning experiences of WoC throughout their life in STEM, and how this relates to their underrepresentation in the field. Using Funds of Identity (Fol) as the theoretical framework, narratives of WoC who are in STEM, and those who chose another path, will be illustrated. Identity is a dynamically changing aspect through which both social groups and individuals continually shape how one perceives herself. To capture this, STEM-timelines will be designed by participants to aid in deep reflection for the storytelling of their STEM journeys and their changing STEM-identities.

This research explores the intersection of both race and gender and identifies tools which influence the development or distortion of STEM-identities and how these influences change over time throughout the lives of participants.

- 1: What are the tools that WoC have access to (or not) for the construction of their STEM-identities throughout their STEM trajectory?
- 2: Along their STEM-timelines, how do the STEM-identities differ between WoC who have remained in the field and those who have left?
- 3: What enhancements to the field do WoC believe are necessary to promote more equitable practices to improve learning experiences for future WoC in STEM?

Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Initial findings indicate both groups of participants identify the *lack of engagement of STEM towards societal issues*, along with *representational mentorship* as tools they lacked throughout their STEM-journeys. However *familial support and pressures*, acted as a factor which both helped and hurt students' progress over time. The defining difference between participants' identity formation of those who persisted in STEM and those who did not, was the degree to which participants *compromised their mental health and wellbeing* in pursuit of STEM. Whether they remained in or left STEM, all participants encourage the younger generation of WoC to pursue STEM but hope that *greater exposure to opportunities and support systems*, networking, counterspaces and internships would be more widely available.

Our stories, like our identities, are dynamic, temporal in nature and influenced by our participation and interaction within our communities. This research is designed to provide more than just a snapshot of the experiences of WoC in STEM, but rather illustrate the changing and continuous shaping of identities as well as the profound impacts these events may have on our learners. Gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of the experiences of WoC in STEM and the phases of time in which intervention would have been most impactful, could greatly improve the experience of these learners and thus aid in their retention and attraction to the field. As researchers and educators, we need to recognize these issues and engage with these students to determine the best methods in rectifying the negative aspects that may be impacting the formation of their identities and thus learning experiences of these students throughout their academic and career STEM-journeys.

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“If You Waver, You’re Tarnished” – Ethnographic studies following Danish Oral Exams from a Student Perspective

Based on an ethnographic study this substantive paper explores Danish upper secondary students’ preparatory processes for high-stakes exams that are rich in tradition: the oral exams. Appropriate exam participation is crucial to students’ potential for a free choice of further education. Oral examination is a dialogic practice based on the assumption that students’ perception of assessment criteria will influence their exam presentations. My research question is: How do upper secondary school students navigate the Danish oral examination system?

I investigated central policy documents and analyzed data from a five-month period of fieldwork in two schools in 2018. I followed four 18-20-year-old case-students preparing for and participating in eight oral exams asking for their reflections on a successful exam performance. I joined teaching in 10 subjects, since any of these could be sampled for the case-students’ exams. Analytically, I explored these data with Bitzer’s theory of the rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1968), Moje’s concept of navigation (Moje, 2013), and Bakhtin’s dialogical concepts of addressees and superaddressees (Bakhtin, 1986).

The fieldwork shows how the case-students perceive the oral exam situation as uncertain and highly complex. Students navigate everyday interactions struggling to identify a fitting exam response. Instead of delivering the curriculum requirement of independent critical interpretations, students focus on “cracking the teacher’s code”. Classroom dialogues indicated that “alternative” interpretations of texts would be a confrontation with the teacher-assessor, why students withdraw from independent analysis. Consequently, students’ ‘own’ interpretations of texts are not present for assessment at oral exams. Furthermore, challenges intensify if the student reads the law documents believing in a transparent examination system. Relying on law documents’ criteria for the exams poses the risk that the student misses nano-contextually generated key indications of the good exam performance.

This ethnographic study contributes with insight into how students perceive and actively handle exam situations as a continued process of figuring out what exams are, and thereby what quality in education is. Students must navigate the decisive interactions with their teachers and assessors and these navigations start long before the exam starts.

Following the process from preparation to the actual exam participation, the ethnographic analyses contribute to international assessment research by pointing to the process and the nano-contextual situatedness of exams.

The students’ intentions of teacher-code-cracking ought to initiate research - even though the dominating Danish-German didactical tradition leaves exams little attention. Students’ notions of the good exam performance are notions of what it takes to succeed in the educational system.

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## **Non-school evaluation: Assessing students' achievements in Higher Education**

Within the sociology of education, the selective function of educational institutions as they grade – and thereby categorize their students – is acknowledged and critiqued. Treatment programs in regular schools differentiate students as good/bad, talented/untalented, studious/lazy and certify this in personalized records. However, as public institutions, schools have always been confronted with influential counter discourses and other forms of teaching and evaluation. Universities, for instance, run by different pedagogies of education, learning and independence; in doing so, they question the notion of teacher-centered instruction or de-individualized assessment. At institutions of Higher Education, instructors treat students at eye level as competent members and address them as prospective professionals in a given discipline or field of knowledge (fiction of collegiality). Yet, in facilitating mass education and individual promotion, universities are equally selective in certifying which students are eligible for an academic degree and which ones are marked as failing to meet standard requirements. From a comparative perspective, we examine how different academic courses in history and engineering set-up and moderate students' evaluation of achievement.

By drawing on ethnographic research (interviews, participant observation), conducted before and within pandemic times of teaching in locally situated as well as digitally mediated forms at different universities in Germany, we address the lived variety of forms through which students are being observed and examined on an everyday level. We aim at exploring 1) how different forms of assessment vary de-individualized and individualized evaluation in ways that gradually modulate the power difference between students and professors and 2) exactly how those in charge of teaching and evaluation produce, negotiate and deliver assessments as ordinal classifications of students.

Educational settings come to light as organizational treatment programs productive of variable forms of student bodies. The contrastive design sheds light on the differences between specific social, material and symbolic dimensions of evaluation in two disciplines. Also, we provide an outlook on how recent adaptations to digitally mediated forms of teaching transform the context and constellations of human evaluation at the academy.

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## **Mustering as method: Ethnographic impulses and actor-network theory in education**

This methodological paper engages with the implications of a growing appreciation of new materialist approach in general, and actor-network theory in particular, in the context of education. Originally developed in the social studies of science, over recent decades actor-network theory has been used to question and render complex social explanations for educational phenomena. Actor-network theory, 'the social' is taken to be an enactment of heterogenous assemblages of human and non-human entities.

Rather than being a theory, actor-network theory is an approach to research that displaces humanism and foregrounds the assemblage and re/assemblage. The role of the researcher is to trace these processes; there is no method for actor-network theory. Rather, the researcher is involved in a mustering of processes of assemblage. This minute tracing of process most closely evokes ethnography; yet the implications of posthumanism demand different data generation techniques, guided by principles of symmetry, irreduction, translation and alliance.

This paper builds on the notion of what Law (2004) referred to as 'method assemblage' – the process of crafting the boundaries between presence, manifest absence, and Otherness. Rather than striving for representativeness, Law uses the term 'gathering' to talk about relations between things without locating those relations within normative logics (2004: 160). For Law (2004: 146), the challenge is to extend the list of what is appropriate for method. In this paper, I work with my discomfort with the gentleness of 'gathering' and its implication that data is out there to be simply collecting. Mustering – which the dictionary defines as an assemblage in preparation for battle – gives a more apt vision of the struggle involved in ethnographic research that must trace an array of actors: texts (including but not limited to textbooks); playgrounds; visual depictions; maps; human apprehensions; bodies; machines; virtual learning environments and digital and other technologies; ceremonies; weather; musical performances; architecture; guide dogs; landscapes and so on. For Law, these are all 'crafted forms of presence' that can be used as methods of depiction and that, in their character, illustrate how our normative approaches to method are, on the one hand, limited materially – often to only textual or pictorial forms – in closing down what might be used to 'craft a particular reality' and, on the other hand, in terms of how they tend to strongly foreground 'absences [the economy, gender, and so on] that are taken to be independent, prior, singular, definite and passive' (Law 2004: 146-7).

In education there had been, until recently, relatively little work done on the methodological implications of new materialist research. Yet, I argue (Kamp 2003) education is well-aligned to such an approach given its fundamental commitment to change and the sheer range of actors that are of necessity fully involved in that change. In this paper, I will present an overview of mustering as methodology, using the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand as my case.

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## **Homework in residential care: an ethnography of social practice**

This paper is dedicated to the results of an ethnographic project on the social practice of homework processing in residential care. Empirical findings on this are important with regard to (inter-)nationally identified educational disadvantages of young people in residential care. The completion of homework after lessons is part of school attendance for German pupils. Up to now, the focus of academic attention has mainly been on the completion of homework in families, but not on young people who grow up in residential care.

Following Pierre Bourdieu, the project focuses on the social practice of doing homework. Therefore the temporal and spatial location of homework as well as the school-related practices of the professionals and the adolescents come into view. The data basis is a total of one year of participant observation in two residential care groups, expanded by group discussions with the professionals and expert interviews with management staff. Although the challenges associated with ethnography in the home context will be addressed in the lecture, the findings on the (re)production of educational inequality in residential care are set centrally.

For the purpose of homework being a fixed part of everyday life in residential care, the young peoples' rooms are equipped with school specific artefacts like a writing desk or -chair. Such artefacts are also found in privileged families and enable the adolescents to deal with homework independently. Beyond that an orientation of residential care towards the expectations of the school is revealed.

Additionally the professionals are also involved in the homework process. Support and control are two central practices, which are intended to ensure that the tasks are completed correctly and properly. This shows, that homework in residential groups not only serves to practise and repeat school-related content, but also to establish a (better) fit between the children and adolescents and school. Thus, in addition to the incorporation of the relevance of homework on the further course of life, the internalisation of a behaviour demanded at school is also aimed at by the professionals. Nevertheless, the results also show that homework in residential care experiences (re)producing educational inequality due to insufficient digital, didactic and personnel resources.

Ethnographic research in residential care stands for ethnographic research in the homes of young people. Accordingly, the one-year ethnography was designed as an alternation of closeness and distance. This involved balancing the ambiguity of participation in and observation of everyday life so that the adolescents built up trust in the researcher and allowed her to observe homework situations in their children's rooms. Consequently, phases of participation, such as playing together with the adolescents or support during homework processing, were replaced by phases of pure observation. Through this procedure, school-related practices, rules and routines could be experienced on the one hand, and on the other hand, the school-related conditions in everyday life could be observed. The observation of school-

related practices made it possible to gain information about the habitus of the adolescents and the professionals and their (non-)fit to school.

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### **Creating flow in higher education innovation**

The aim of this paper is to examine how program teams in higher education create flow by handling the developmental space paradox. Developmental space is a social space created by team members in their interactions with each other and their environment involving four activities: creating future, reflecting, organizing, and dialoging. Research shows that the more developmental space a team creates, the better their results. However while creating developmental space, teams need to consider a performance as well as a sensemaking orientation. A team in an innovation process to change the curriculum is faced with considerable time constructs but also needs to slow down and ask question whether and discuss broadly with each other how certain curriculum goals can be made. These two orientations appear to be contradictory with each other, creating a paradox. Looking forward, getting results in the process, focusing on the project goals can be perceived as opposites of slowing down, asking questions, enquiring, looking back. This paper tries to grasp how the studied teams handled this paradox and got into 'flow' or not. This paper aims to increase the knowledge on successful innovation initiatives.

Our data emerges from a three-year ethnographical fieldwork conducted within a university for applied sciences in the Netherlands. The paper focuses on the analysis of observations, transcripts of interviews and documents.

In a university wide change process twelve teams were studied. The documents from the twelve teams were analyzed, the researchers regularly took part in meetings as observers as well as participants, and with team innovation leaders interviews were conducted. The teams were responsible for leading the change initiative within their program. The teams from different faculties within the university had their own way in which they made things happen.

All innovation leaders took an effort to create development space. Whilst creating developmental space took great effort by all teams responsible for the innovation process, some teams experienced flow whilst others did not. A key issue for flow appears to be the way teams handle the developmental space paradox (Derksen, Blomme, De Caluwe, Rupert, & Simons, 2019) but more social elements were very influential such as trust, fun, history and creativity. The most successful teams had at one point an 'golden idea'. This idea created enthusiasm within the team but also provided a model of how the process within the team should be addressed. For instance if the team wanted to create a learning environment in which students and 'clients' worked and learned together, it also meant that the 'client' should be part of the design process. Another example is the teacher training team who wrote an image of the teacher they want to educate but understood that this image applied to

themselves as well and should be illustrated by the way the innovation process was conducted.

While some quantitative research based studies show the influence of the developmental space for effectfulness of teams, there is little research done on how successful teams actually use this space.

The paper seeks to help in filling this gap. By describing the process from within this ethnography shall enable us to understand how teams handle the paradox between the performance driven orientation and the sensemaking orientation. This paper contributes to the insights on innovation in higher education by studying teams who are leading an innovation process.

The paper leans heavily on the flow-concept (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikzentmihaly, 1990) and on theory on paradoxes (Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Dehler, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011).

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**“My words were like scribbles”. Language competence imbalance in ethnographic interviews.**

This methodology paper explores some issues about ethnographic interviewing and analysis in education policy research.

Our data were originally collected for a PhD project on policy enactments (Ball et al., 2012) and emerge from a one year fieldwork in a State school for adults in Italy, which offers mainly second language (L2) and basic education for immigrants.

The role of interaction and language is a crucial aspect of fieldworks (Gal, 2012). However, the conduction, transcription and interpretation of the 24 interviews with students (14F, 10M), raised some specific methodological reflections, both because students were non-native speakers of the language (Italian) in which they were interviewed; and because the interviewer was familiar to the field as a former teacher of Italian for foreigners.

Through a reflective analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), this paper aims to consider critically the way data were gathered and interpreted, and to explore how power disparities emerged in several ways during the interactions. By taking into account some insights from sociolinguistics on communicative competence inequality (Hymes, 1992; Hudson 1996), and from research on interactions among native and non-native speakers (Ferguson, 1975; Long, 1985; Giacalone Ramat, 2003), this proposal addresses to the specific form of interaction of the ethnographic interview (Forsely, 2008), through the research question:

How does language imbalance influence the interview, both in terms of power relations over the interaction and of the researcher’s influence on the data?

The analysis provides insights on and examples of:

- the intertwining of the different roles embodied both by the researcher, who is also a teacher and a native speaker of the dominant language; and by the participants, who are also students and non-native speakers;
- how interactants navigate the communicative space and employ strategies of adaptation, including the use of other languages and extra-linguistic communication;
- issues related with the transcription and the interpretation of the participants’ speech.

Even though the interactants employed several strategies that enabled communication, the interviews opened up for not only understanding the informants,

but also resulted in misunderstandings and ambiguities, which call for critical reflecting upon the approaches applied and the possibilities of interpretation that data allow.

As language is strictly situated in socio-cultural contexts (Hudson 1996), linguistic resources are not circulating equally among the whole speaking community (Bourdieu 1991).

Students are significant actors within educational settings, and their point of view can illuminate the understanding of policy enactments. However, the use of the L2 with participants with a limited communicative competence, implies a peculiar engagement of the interviewer in the interaction. This is a crucial point, as interpreting interviews entails also to acknowledge how the researcher, through his/her interactions, but also through his/her mere presence, influences and shapes the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 101-102).

This proposal contributes to better understand how power circulates through language practices displayed over ethnographic interviews, especially when they embed an evident inequality in terms of communicative competence.

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### **The value of informal conversations in the framework of a contextualised ethnographic study in small rural schools**

In most ethnographic research, informal conversations are presented as a complementary technique to other techniques that define the ethnographic method, such as in-depth interviews and participant observation (Hammersley, 2006). However, from this study, informal conversations are understood as a way of adding context and authenticity to the data collected, as well as an opportunity for validation (Swain and Spire, 2020) and for social and educational transformation (Vigo, Dieste and Thuston, 2016).

The methodological study presented below aims to explore informal conversations during the ethnographic research process carried out in a study on creative teaching practices through digital media in schools located in rural territories. The more specific objective is to identify how informal conversations during the research contribute to the transformation of the situations investigated (Brandt and Carlone, 2012; Coffrey, 2010). More specifically, the aim is to find out how informal conversations between researchers and participants during the research connect to the development of creative teaching practices in small rural schools.

Without losing sight of the purpose and objectives set out, the ethnographic study is developed from the critical perspective as it allows: overcoming research understood as the mere obtaining of knowledge, breaking with hierarchical relationships between the researcher and the participants and contributing to transformation and change (Maisuria and Beach, 2017).

The data emerge from ethnographic fieldwork (Bagley, Beach, and Marques, 2018; Hammersley, 2006), conducted over 10 months (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004) in two small rural schools in the context of the Aragon Region (Spain). The immersion in the life of these educational realities facilitated the collection of information through participant observation, informal conversations, and in-depth interviews, with a total of 120 hours of observation, where conversations took place, and 30 in-depth interviews. The analysis of the data is carried out through the Grounded Theory method (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012).

Throughout the data collection, parallel feedback to the participants was carried out in the form of informal conversations that would later materialise in the form of reports. It is in this process of informal conversations and interaction that the knowledge and exchange of experiences around creative teaching practices was favored, thus promoting the questioning and contrast of their own practices, which led to the reconstruction of these (Vigo, Dieste and Thurston, 2016; Vigo-Arrazola, 2019), this being the main result of the study.

At this point, the role of the researcher also changes, listening to and valuing the voices of the participants (Boylan and Woolsey, 2015) and the constant and natural communicative exchange motivated by the long stay in the target contexts of study,

leads to an understanding and co-learning (Beach, 2010) through which teachers become co-researchers of their own practices, understanding them as reflective agents capable of changing education and the reality of their schools (Cerletti, 2013; Wang, 2013). Teachers analysed their practices, identified areas for improvement and modified them based on critical reflection processes, resulting in creative teaching practices (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004) that were based on listening to students' voices, introducing local culture into the school curriculum, and connecting teaching to students' lives.

The research presented shows the importance of interaction processes with teachers, specifically through informal conversations, for the reflection, transformation, and improvement of their teaching practices (Brandt and Carlone, 2012; Coffrey, 2010).

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## **Cooking Emotions With Poetry –The Challenge Of Using I-Poems From Field Encounters To Narrate Research Stories**

Researchers of difference face key methodological and analytical challenges in highlighting narratives to draw out tensions from the lived experiences of their informants. This can be exacerbated for auto-ethnographers as they attempt to weave events from research settings to provide a viable story that achieves a balance between their own identities while guarding against subjectivity. Data collection was enhanced by the use of visual elicitation, using informant-generated images to draw out everyday scenes in schools. This rich data provided challenges as to which stories to include in moving from the 'raw' data to the 'cooked' narratives.

This paper highlights how the use of I-poems provided a powerful hermeneutic method with which to unpick intersectionality in education settings. Drawing on a doctoral study, looking at race and reflection in education (Patel, 2015), it explores the use of I-poems generated using the Listening Guide (LG)(Gilligan et al, 2003). Key influences are taken from Dorothy Smith's work on Institutional Ethnography (2005) and Critical Race Theory (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001) both of which eschew essentialist views of race and identity and require much more detailed intersectional analyses.

The study takes a critical realist perspective which posits that there are real world effects of ideal concepts. This allowed the unconscious responses of informants to emerge from the corpus of the data, buried but strikingly revealed using innovative methods from social psychology. The use of the LG reveals I-poems, allowing the voice of the first person to emerge as it becomes constructed in personal discourse.

In a literary allusion one informant identified herself as being a 'Golden Girl' despite facing oppression from age, ethnicity and religion as well as gender as she strove to live up to her image as a confident primary school middle leader. This positioning showed the LG's usefulness in displaying flows of power and is invaluable in providing access to the emotions and feelings that are necessary when examining race/identity to produce interpretations of social and political structures present in the research setting. Additionally, it allows the generation of counter-stories, one of the central tenets of CRT used to reveal hidden experiences of power.

Taking poems as 'episodes' in informants lives allowed the study to create a powerful narrative to juxtapose everyday events with the ruling relations (Smith 2005) that surround them, offering insight into the use of reflective practice in

education. The study also highlighted the shutting down of critical spaces for educators as they struggle with dealing with issues of race.

Contribution to education/ethnography:

This paper:-

demonstrates how researchers can gain access to unconscious themes drawing on emotion using the LG

demonstrates the use of I-poems to generate narrative episodes and to act as a discursive literary means of 'data-display'

critically examines the generation of counter-stories in education settings concerned with intersectionality

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### **What can graffiti tell us about emotions and motivation in learning? A contribution from an ethnographic perspective**

This is a substantive paper and presents an ethnographic study on the Pamplona graffiti community analyzing the emotions and motivation necessary for successful learning. Because of the diversity in how we learn and what motivates us, totalizing theories have not provided a satisfactory answer to the problem of motivation, transmission, and learning at school. This article makes a proposal about learning in relation to a very specific topic: graffiti painting in the Pamplona writers' community. It compares the conditions of non-institutional learning in the graffiti community and institutional learning in schools.

Graffiti communities are usually quite hermetic due to the illegality of the practice. In our case, the research was made possible by the contact established by one of the ethnographers with a graffiti writer from Pamplona. The research follows an ethnographic perspective including interviews and observations of graffiti-writing practice in the community. This method allows us to delve into a specific reality, in this case, that of the graffiti community of Pamplona, through dialogue with the writers themselves.

According to the Pamplona writers who participated in this study, there are elements of graffiti that anyone can learn. These include technical issues, for example, which paint to use, particular tricks, or a certain style. Ways of doing graffiti can also be learned by observing what others do, looking at videos on Internet platforms, with their peers, or through experimentation. However, these writers believe in an innate driving force that makes them special when it comes to this activity. They hold that an individual either has or does not have this force. In other words, according to the writers, although the technical elements of graffiti can be learned, there is also an innate element that makes a person become a graffiti writer. The belief in that innate element generates a series of emotions that motivate the writer to continue painting.

The statements made by the Pamplona writers have implications for school-based learning. A school can become a place where students feel special, and where each student believes in his or her idiosyncrasy and distinctiveness. Therefore, a school that motivates learners is one that creates spaces in which students are aware of their strengths, believe in them, and can discover them for themselves. That is, the key to learning is less about telling students that they are capable of doing something, and more about helping them to feel that they are capable of doing something because they have the potential for it. Therefore, care needs to be taken to create conditions in which learning can take place. This involves putting the emphasis not on knowledge but on the emotional components of learning. All in all, the article concludes that belief in one's potential is of key importance for motivating

learning, and that schools can use this insight to create better conditions for students to learn.

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**Production of knowledge of teachers' professional work in the digital platforms' infrastructures of schools – the problem of locating and defining the ethnographic field**

Constructing a field has always been a necessary and difficult task for ethnographers. As been argued by for instance by Burrell (2009), defining the nature and boundaries of an empirical field are key for the ethnographic process. In an effort to identify and bound fields and make ethnographies recognizable in relation to each other, a plethora of prefixes for the word ethnography have emerged. Types of ethnography have been minted such as critical- and institutional ethnography, and since the emergence of digital cultures attempts to define fields or approaches to ethnography as having specific characteristics have flourished (Hammersley, 2018). Prefixes such as digital, network and trace have emerged, indicating lineages from earlier forms of ethnography and attempts to articulate distinct sets of methods. In practice, however, many of these prefixes are used interchangeably and the differences between forms of ethnography can have little significance. One area that, distinctions between different forms of ethnography have significance, however, is in limiting or at least complicating the task of defining the kind of ethnography that one is engaged in as one works with an empirical situation that may not necessarily fit nicely in to one definition or another. One such situation is the focus of our work in a Swedish project that examines the possibilities and constraints in teachers' work with a specific focus on how teachers regulate and are regulated by the digital infrastructure and technologies embedded both in schools and classrooms and in teachers' everyday life outside school. Based on that situation, the aim of this paper is to examine the problem of locating and defining the empirical field in relation to different forms of ethnography.

The backdrop for the study is the strong political and economic push for school digitization in Europe and other parts of the world. It forms part of a global technology market and platform economy where internet platform businesses make

up the major part and reach into the core of schools' everyday work. As a consequence, teachers' now work in classrooms and schools that are inextricably embedded and inseparable to the employment of digital technologies. The 'new' normality of teachers is to be constantly connected to the schools' digital systems that has expanded teachers' work across space and time and resulted in the creation of new digital work practices.

In our results we will present a reflexive critique of our own ethnographic engagement with school administrators, principals and teachers in Swedish upper secondary school. This involved collections of different kinds of policy, mapping of infrastructure, combined with participant observation, teachers' self-report of online and offline work, interviews and focus-group interviews.

Our intention is to make a contribution to the ongoing discussion of doing ethnography in the hybrid world where home and field are no longer neatly separated and where the distinction between on- and offline is blurred and overlapping.

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### **Kids Playing "Gran Hermano": Media Play and Interpretive Reproduction in Children's Peer Groups**

This is a substantive empirical paper in which we return to linguistic ethnographic data collected in 2001 on peer play and informal interactions in a group of Gitano children in a mid-sized Spanish city. This data is part of a broader project on Gitano children's language and literacy practices involving sustained ethnographic fieldwork in different settings of the community. The peer interactions corpus was mainly collected in the summer of 2001 (June-September) and includes intense daily participant observation by the first author, over 30h. of audio and video-recordings of children's play and informal interactions in the neighbourhood, interviews with children and family members and the collection of various artifacts produced by the children.

In this paper we draw from Corsaro's sociological framework (e.g. Corsaro, 1992, 2004, 2012) and recent approaches in children's multimodal, sensorial and media literacies (e.g. Marsh, 2012; Cowan, 2020; Rowsell and Schambroth-Abrams, 2021) and analyze children's symbolic enactment of and engagement with the television reality show Gran Hermano (Big Brother - GH/BB). In the Spring-Summer of the year 2000 the first Spanish edition of the reality show/contest 'Big Brother' was broadcast on Spanish television. Throughout the de broadcasting of the first edition the show became an unprecedented media success and popular culture phenomena drawing commentary and attention across social groups and media platforms. The second edition of the contest was broadcast in the Spring of 2001 generating similar media and audience attention. The children involved in this part of fieldwork (a network of relatives, friends and neighbours of about 10 children between 4-13 years of age) were very engaged with this program and incorporated GH into their free symbolic/media play, combining characters and tropes from the two editions of the show broadcasted by the time data was collected.

Our detailed multimodal and micro-ethnographic analysis of video recordings of peer interactions during episodes of GH play shows how children creatively reappropriate multiple social and material elements of their immediate surrounding (including the researcher and the video-camera), reconstruct and resignify space and mobilize multiple semiotic resources to enact different parts of the GH script and routines. The full paper and presentation will examine in detail different episodes of interaction that showcase various interpretive reproduction strategies as discussed within Corsaro's framework, such as: (1) children's creative appropriation of the adult world through,

for example, the incorporation of elements of the physical environments (e.g. trash or cigarette stubs on the street) into symbolic GH play; (2) children's creation of a peer culture and environment through the modification and creation of different infrastructures (e.g. a self-built hut) in the setting repurposed for GH play or; (3) the extension and transformation of child-adult relations in the settings, for example, through the incorporation and reconstruction of fieldwork relations and field-recordings into the GH script play.

Despite the fact that the data examined in this paper is over 20 years old, the detailed micro-ethnographic analysis of the materials and the re-examination of the data through the lens of contemporary social literacies theory allows unpacking peer socialization and media socialization processes as educational/developmental contexts. The data contributes to current analysis of children's media play and media literacies (e.g. Marsh, 2014; Willet, 2013) but is still relatively unique in that it documents children's extended play in informal public settings, rather than school playgrounds or structured/non-formal organizations and activities. In addition, the data recuperated for this paper can be examined historically, as it captures a unique -perhaps transition period- of fully globalized media experiences (e.g. through the national readaptation of the first reality TV shows) but before the advent of digital social media as the main platform for children's popular culture and media consumption.

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### **How Did I Get Here? Expectations and the College-going Process of Low-income Students**

We examine the college-going process of low-income students using ethnographic data to highlight the diversity of experiences within this group that is often overlooked in the literature. We argue that college expectations frame the rest of the college-going process from application to experiences once enrolled. We identify three types of students based on their expectations in high school: the *high achievers*, *followers*, and the *late deciders*. *High achievers* were top students with strong expectations for attending a four-year university due to their academic achievements. *Followers* are students that had weak or inconsistent expectations for attending a four-year university and benefited from the college-for-all culture and structure of high schools, whether it meant following their friends or going with the flow of their high school in applying to a four-year university. *Late deciders* are students who were not academically engaged in high school and instead, seriously considered working full-time after graduation. These students decided late to apply for college and applied to just one university towards the end of their senior year. We argue that expectations provide a frame in which the three types of students make sense of their college experiences, specifically once they begin to struggle in college.

We find:

- For *high achievers*, when they begin to struggle academically, they experience a crisis of identity in their academic self-concept as high achieving. Having been the top students at their high schools, they begin to doubt and lose confidence in their academic ability, and unfortunately, they do not seek help as they are not used to asking.
- For *followers*, since they did not have a strong academic self-concept to begin with, they do not experience a crisis of academic identity when they begin to struggle. Without the structure of high schools that provided them with a clear path for going to college, these students begin to feel lost and question the meaning and purpose of college.
- For *late deciders*, when they begin to struggle or experience issues, they feel that college is lost time or a waste of time. When they experience issues with the university or with professors and coursework, they do not doubt their academic ability or feel lost. Instead, they compare their current situation to opportunities and responsibilities that were missed or neglected because they were in college.

Given that all the students in the study are from low-income backgrounds and most are the first to go to college, they cannot rely on their families for financial or academic support when they encounter setbacks or begin to struggle with coursework. Many of the issues that arose for these students in their first year of college would not have been problematic for students from wealthier backgrounds.

Our findings provide important insights on college persistence. Some students are much closer to leaving college than others and our study shows that stages of departure align with expectations and how they got to college. Universities may want to consider policies and practices that monitor students based on when students applied and if they only applied to one university and offer support for low-income students, especially *late deciders* during the critical first year.

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### **Developing and refining theoretical ideas by applying ethnography in educational research: the example of Goffman's "backstage"**

This study was carried out at a Swedish municipal lower secondary school, with one class in focus. The ethnographic research design comprised four months of observations during lessons and breaks, and two weeks of audio-visual recordings in year 8 (when the pupils were 14 years old) followed by 18 semi-structured interviews with the same pupils one year later. Aiming at getting as close as possible to the pupils' informal conversations and interactions with classmates out of the teachers' (and researcher's) supervision and earshot, an innovative staging of recording devices was applied (Rönn, 2021). Goffman's (1959) theatre metaphor, in which people's behaviours are considered as being enacted either on the "backstage" or "frontstage" of social life was applied as theoretical framework. The concept "backstage" was used for pupils' interaction with peers out of the teachers' sight – inside the classroom as well as outside and after school.

The findings showed that pupils activities backstage, comprised e.g. a) logging into classmates' Google classroom accounts and write original texts for peers, b) swapping computers with peers behind the teacher's back and write original texts for classmates, c) taking pictures of their completed individual assignments and forwarding them to peers who reformulated the texts "in own words", and d) sharing leaked National Tests on the class' informal Snapchat-group. Consequently, some pupils' "individual" assignments were produced in collaboration with peers in backstage spaces. According to the pupils, the teachers were not aware of this, which was confirmed by their teachers.

The findings illustrate how ethnography as method can be used to develop and refine Goffman's (1959) theory. In his theatre metaphor, backstage activities are face-to-face and synchronous. However, this study show that pupils' backstage activities can take place in different backstage spaces, each one with its own interactional patterns; synchronous face-to-face interaction (inside the classroom), synchronous person-to-person interaction (phone calls after school), asynchronous person-to-person interaction (e.g. forwarding pictures of completed assignments to peers) and asynchronous person-to-people (communicating through the class' Snapchat group). By applying ethnography, four backstage spaces (which pupils can swap between) have been identified. This is similar to Hillyard (2010), who demonstrated examples of expanding Goffman's theory of etiquette into etiquettes (plural), and thus how theory conceptually can be refined as a result of empirical research in applying ethnographic ideas in practice.

Through applying ethnography, a contribution to the expanding Goffman's theoretical framework was made.

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### **Unchartered Territory: Piloting Collaborative Qualitative Research on Race at a Predominantly White University**

This methodology paper analyzes the implementation and findings of 2-year pilot collaborative research project currently in progress on the lack of racial diversity and subsequent challenges for students of color at a predominantly White institution (PWI) in the southern United States of America.

The original research team of eleven university stakeholders who identify as African American or White—two faculty members, one staff member, and eight students—met regularly over an academic year, building community as a team by problematizing race at this PWI and crafting research questions to organize the project. These questions seek participants' perceptions of the relationship between the lack of diversity and specific divisions of the university: academics, student life, and recruitment. Having chosen ethnographic interviews and focus groups for data collection and crafted interview prompts for both, they gained institutional review board approval for research the next academic year.

For the data collection, the team initially divided into three subgroups; each subgroup conducted individual interviews for one semester. The teams were responsible for locating and interviewing student participants and uploading research notes and recordings to a shared secure data storage site. The team met when available to discuss the process. For the second semester, the whole team is currently conducting student focus groups and meeting as a team when possible to discuss the process.

Participants consistently identified a homogeneous university context that is challenging for its students of color. Participants described microaggressions and institutional shortcomings that reinforce their minority status in classrooms, housing, and student life. When asked to consider solutions, participants offered a range of opinions but ultimately pointed to the need for a cultural sea change in values across the university for seeking diversity and racial inclusion.

This project has demonstrated the potential that a collaborative approach to educational research has, from building community among the researchers to the power of a collective voice in addressing racial injustice. Sharing research ownership among a community's stakeholders enhances the power of its findings and the agency of its members.

Methodologically, this paper serves as a guide for considering the time and effort needed to effectively implement such a complex project. While the process began with notable momentum and some positive outcomes, continuing challenges

emerged soon after the data collection process began. First, the two faculty researchers grapple with balancing their research expertise and positioning with an equitable team approach. This challenge is amplified by the other team members' minimal research training and experience. In addition, there was little insight into the individual interviews despite agreed upon interview prompts, with wide ranges of time spent in the interviews and issues early on about the actual meaning of the prompts. Most significantly, project management and a resulting loss in momentum is a Herculean challenge: this extracurricular project becomes ancillary to regular academic demands and life commitments for all team members, despite their clearly articulated belief in the project's cause.



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## **Transforming argumentation in L2 postgraduates' academic writing through pedagogical innovation: a linguistic ethnography at a UK university**

This methodological paper reports on an ongoing study in the tradition of 'linguistic ethnography' (Copland and Creese, 2015), whose intended outcome is pedagogical innovation aimed at transforming argumentation in the academic writing of L2 doctoral students in our increasingly internationalised and diverse HE sector. Although argumentation in student writing has received growing attention in the literature recently (Mitchell et al, 2000; Andrews, 2010; Wingate, 2012; Salter-Dvorak, 2016, 2017), we still know little about how individuals build up awareness and performance in argumentation skills. In line with Mitchell et al, (2000) and Wingate, (2012), I contend that these are best built up in the context of the discipline studied.

Following an overview of the literature on pedagogies for argumentation, I will present the design of my current project, a small-scale linguistic ethnography grounded in the interpretive epistemological tradition of participant practitioner observation (Hammersely and Atkinson 2007). The project builds on my previous research (Salter-Dvorak, 2014; 2016, 2017, 2021) in which my insider position as a lecturer afforded access to multiple data-sets. Focussing on argumentation in the discipline of TESOL/Education, it aims first, to provide a pedagogic intervention in the form of optional workshops in order to develop argumentation in the academic writing of doctoral students; second, to carry out a constructivist evaluation of the materials and activities used with a view to producing a set of materials for this constituency.

The workshops will focus on the practical development and application of skills relating to the logical structure of argument in the discipline of TESOL/Education. Materials will provide examples of grounds, claims, and evidence, (Toulmin, 1958) showing how the argument of a text is articulated at macro, meso and micro level. Participants will critique texts, e.g., recognising fallacious arguments, revise these, and compare revisions with those of peers. They will then work on argumentation in their own drafts by exchanging feedback with peers on sections which they have selected. They will also receive feedback from the researcher.

Post-implementation evaluation will consider the effectiveness of the workshops and a way forward through the following questions:

1. To what extent does students' spoken articulation of argumentation in their writing develop over the course of the workshops?
2. Which aspects of the workshops/materials enable or impede awareness of argumentation to develop?
3. To what extent does students' argumentation develop in their academic writing over the course of the workshops?

Data will comprise materials used in the intervention, focus groups with students on the above; two case studies of students comprising semi-structured interviews by

artefact on sections of thesis drafts worked on during/following the workshops, and my journal on the interventions.

These data sets will be triangulated, providing material for thematic content analysis to identify key factors in participants' awareness of argumentation. The outcomes of this linguistic ethnography will be first, a set of materials for developing argumentation; second, contribution to theory in this under-researched aspect of academic writing.

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**Contested Identities; Competing Accountabilities: the making of a 'good' public schoolteacher in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

This substantive paper presents key learnings from an ethnographic investigation of how public school teachers perform as bureaucrats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, Pakistan. Using a combination of participant observation, interviews and documentary/archival analysis over 16 months, this work traces the norms and strategies through which teacher-bureaucrats come to be both detracted from, and motivated towards, learning-oriented performance in government schools. By exploring teacher accounts of themselves against the state's official narratives and expectations of teacher performance, the work draws attention to the importance of teacher voice in understanding the everyday enactment or adaptation of state policy.

The comparison of official and lived experiences in teacher policy demonstrates that despite seemingly large political, bureaucratic and legal reform efforts aimed at 'depoliticising' teacher quality in KP, decades-long politics of patronage and compliance are still critical mediators of teacher performance (Levy et al., 2018). Additionally, performance measurement by the state does not seek to capture teacher effort as it is embodied by teachers in their everyday routines. In fact, official rules for performance continue to reproduce narratives of generalised bureaucratic practice, overlooking the peculiar challenges faced by the education sector in a conflict-affected environment.

Within these official structures, however, everyday school practice reveals an agency through which teacher-bureaucrats accumulate social and cultural capital. This finding provides an important departure for the Pakistani case from existing studies on teacher performance or sense of self in resource-constrained, misaligned systems like these wherein teachers tend to be perceived as voiceless actors singularly compliant to state instruction (World Bank, 2018; Aiyar et al., 2015).

In contrast to broad-brush narratives of passivity or powerlessness through which teachers are often represented in the South Asian context, including that of Pakistan, this work argues teacher-bureaucrats are agents of both compliance and agency. The realisation that despite frictions to the delivery of meaningful education, teachers can continue to account for their identities and practice in child-centred ways emphasises a socio-cultural revision to how teaching is framed in less understood contexts like that of KP.

The findings shared through this work also have meaningful implications for a recently emerging literature on teacher education in South Asia, which finds that agentic expressions of service and care are demanded by teachers to be recognised both in processes of training as well as evaluations (Setty et al, 2019). Above all, this work contributes to a large gap that currently exists regarding what happens to two of education's most important actors in a large public systems like Pakistan: the teacher and his/her student.

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### **The Challenge of Insta-Ethnographies: Being T/Here, Bounding, and Tracings on Instagram**

The purpose of this paper is to tease out and consider the challenges of conducting ethnographic studies solely in the virtual world(s) of social media like Instagram, the context of this specific inquiry. To illustrate these challenges, I will be drawing from data taken from a three year (2017-2020) ethnographic study of the young adult literature (YA) community on Instagram. It is predominantly a meditation on methodology, though making use of study data as a way to materialize and situate the conversation.

In attempting to conduct an Instagram-only ethnographic study, three central challenges emerged. First, there was not a clear delineation of *where* I was as an ethnographer: here? or there? I came to think of myself as being *t/here* which is perhaps a state of being both here and there simultaneously. This liminal positionality presented an opportunity to reconsider the well-worn paths of how an ethnographer makes decisions about being an observer, participant, or working the hyphen in participant-observer. Each possibility offered different logics and ethics. Second, it became apparent that bounding the community being studied was very difficult as edges between one community and another are blurred, ephemeral, and interrelated. And, finally, I had to consider the consequences of making choices of what to follow in and through Instagram. In literacies studies, my content home, established wisdom would suggest that I follow a person/people or that I follow a literacies practice. However, these choices foreshortened my ability to access, see, and trace the community participation which lead me to follow the text/idea/happening in order to more fully map YA on Instagram.

This paper will be of interest to ethnographers who are considering how ethnography might evolve in the spaces of virtual worlds and to those who are specifically conducting work on social media. The implications of these methodological questions will also be compelling for those who are grounding their ethnographic work in poststructural, posthuman, object-oriented ontology, or feminist new materialist theories. Contributing the methodological approaches of being *t/here* and following the happening will be of use to teachers and ethnographers alike who are considering how to traverse the online worlds of their students/participants.

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### **‘You can’t know, you’re not 5’: an exploration of children’s views of being in Primary 1.**

While there is now an extensive literature on, and vigorous debate over, how best to foster children’s learning and development in the first years of primary school, there is a striking lacuna in this literature. There is very little in the way of fine-grained, immersive research that explores the perspectives of the children themselves. The study on which this paper draws set out to address this gap. This paper reports on a 10-month ethnographic study which set out to gain an in-depth, contextually grounded, understanding of children’s views and perceptions of their everyday, lived experiences of being in Primary 1. The main participants were 50 Primary 1 children attending a single Scottish primary school. Data were gathered through close observation and the use of a range of participatory activities, including drawings, semi structured conversations, photographs, story books, Circle Time, and puppets/toys, which were designed to provide a variety of spaces through which children might share their experiences, views and perceptions of being in school.

While this is primarily a substantive paper, considerable attention is given to examining how the insights gained from the study could not have been achieved without the deployment of specific ethnographic ways of acting and being. A reflexive discussion is provided of how the specific methods of the research study enabled insights into children’s everyday school experiences that could not have been known otherwise. This discussion also highlights the importance of trusting relationships, key questions of positionality and ethics, the non-verbal/visual means employed to allow children to opt in or out of the research process, and the delicate balancing act of researcher access within school settings.

The study found that the children’s experiences of being in school had a profound impact on their emergent conceptualisations of necessary ‘practices of being’ in school, which strongly linked to ‘practices of belonging’ and social positioning. Three substantive themes emerged: children’s emergent sense of identity and belonging; bodily movement and choice; opportunities for peer friendships. Most notably, it was found that the children commonly perceived of school as a place where you would be continuously judged to be ‘right’ or to be ‘wrong’, in ways that were intrinsically linked to judgements of capability and belonging. A fragility in this sense of belonging emerged that impacted on children’s willingness to take risks in their learning, for fear of ‘getting it wrong’; and tensions were identified between the school systems and structures and children’s own preferences of ways of being.

This study provided a valuable insight into how the children themselves spoke of their everyday ‘lived’ experience of being in Primary 1 and how they made sense of this time and place. Consonant with the ethnographic nature of this study, the children’s talk was interpreted against the backdrop of the context within which it occurred. The study therefore involved close examination of the structures, spatial organisation and systems of the school in conjunction with how the children spoke of this time and place. It was observed that many of the school systems, structures and

spatial organisational practices resulted in a strong focus on notions of the 'ready child', where children perceived their role primarily as 'fitting in'. This study highlights ways in which seeking to foster children's voices and attending to their perspectives may act to undermine this conception of the 'ready child' and better attend to the needs of the individual.

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The pastoral work of course leaders in college based higher education: an institutional ethnography

This paper stems from a PhD focussed on the work of course leaders for college based higher education (CBHE) in the UK – university-level programmes delivered in general further education colleges that predominantly provide technical and vocational courses for students aged 16-18. The higher education courses are delivered as part of a franchise arrangement with a local higher education institution (HEI). The research draws on institutional ethnography (IE) (Smith, 2005) to investigate the work of the course leaders. The focus of this paper is pastoral work; an element of unseen work carried out by course leaders. IE offers a way to explore the social organisation of institutions through textually-mediated work (Jones, et al., 2014).

In line with an IE approach, observations, interviews, and document were used to collect data (Campbell and Gregor, 2008). I have observed course leaders carrying out pastoral work; mostly this work was face to face. However, the college group does not have designated spaces for these meetings, therefore course leaders needed to find a quiet space. The lack of dedicated space reveals an inherent lack of awareness of this type of work. Interviews in IE form an open-ended inquiry which allow me to find out how things work and are used to reveal the ruling relations which shape everyday work (Smith, 2006). Therefore, following observations of the pastoral work being conducted by course leaders, I interviewed them about their pastoral work. They talked about pastoral work, not only to meet the needs of their learners but also to be able to satisfy the requirements of the audit culture inherent in FE and HE. IE allows the researcher to move beyond the local position into the social organisation of the institution. This allowed me to follow-up on my inquiry into pastoral work with managers and observe textually mediated meetings. I found that the requirements to carry out pastoral work is implicit in meeting the needs of the audit culture from within the organisation and the wider higher education institution. This includes learner progress meetings and audits, and student voice events both within and external to the college group. Pastoral work addresses any issues which may arise in student feedback. In addition to observations and interviews, I analysed documentation which would discuss pastoral work, looking at staff timetables, job specifications and contracts of employment. However, I found an absence of pastoral work in the documents, thus reinforcing the 'unseen' nature of the pastoral work of course leaders.

By using IE, I have been able to form an inquiry into the pastoral work of course leaders for CBHE starting from the standpoint of course leaders moving into the ruling relations of the organisation. It has allowed me to illuminate often-overlooked processes of pastoral work specifically as well as the work of CBHE course leaders more generally.

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### **Eating practices of young people between residential care, family, peer group, school, vocational education and work**

The research project "Eating Practices of Young People in Residential Care" examines the eating practices of young people living in residential care as well as the organisational preparation of food in the institutions. In this context, questions of organisational and youth studies are pursued in equal measure, including for instance how the living groups are formed through "food" and what significance eating practices have for the individual adolescents in the course of identity formation and becoming part of society. Residential care means the accommodation, care and education of young people during day and night, meaning that they do not or temporarily do not live with their families. Eating practices are defined as food procurement, preparation, consumption situations and taste judgement (Warde, 2013). The project focuses on young people from the age of 12.

The cross-location research project, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), is based on a mixed-methods design. Within the framework of our qualitatively oriented sub-project, ethnographic research was conducted in the style of Grounded Theory Methodology. The data material includes observation protocols, photos and text messages (via messenger and disposable camera), diary entries as well as interviews (via telephone and video conference). The great diversity of the data material is due to the fact that we conducted research during the COVID-19 pandemic and the field could not be accessed. The submitted paper will be material based.

Through food practices, young people connect and disconnect their lifeworld contexts, such as living group, family, school/vocational education and peer group. Eating practices in the living group are understood as community based on rules (e.g. on presence, duration, amount of food). On the other hand, the informality of eating in the family and peer group as well as own food supplies in the living group are identified as 'private' eating practices. The COVID-19 pandemic changes eating practices: The living group becomes the central eating place, young people experience isolation during quarantines, and a 'new' flexibility of institutions in organising meals becomes apparent.

Up to now, residential care has not been the focus of educational research on meals (Markert et al., 2021). Hence, there is little explored research on how young people's meal practices are pedagogically influenced by the organisation of meals in residential care. In addition, our research shows young people in residential care in all their lifeworld contexts and does not limit them to residential care. In this way, we generate new findings on young people's everyday management around eating as well as on young people's identity development through eating practices.

As a result of the contact restrictions introduced by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the accompanying field absences, there is a methodological development of the ethnography. Thus the young people themselves become the researchers present in the field.

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### **Mapping school buildings using sensory ethnography: Participatory methods for reshaping learning environments**

The paper discusses methods of mapping the sensory-affective dimension of school buildings using participatory ethnography, with an emphasis on multi-modal sensor technologies and spatial theories of flow, affect, and envelopment. Our interdisciplinary research team from education, architecture and design focuses on methodological innovations in sensory ethnography (Pink 2005; Pink et. al. 2015), as part of an ESRC funded project “Mapping spatial practices and social distancing in smart schools: Sensory and digital ethnographic methods”. We discuss data from a year-long ethnography in a secondary school in Liverpool, exploring adolescents’ relationship with school buildings under post-pandemic conditions.

We present a series of school maps, co-produced with students and staff, as ethnographic artifacts documenting the sensory-affective shape of the school building, capturing both physical and atmospheric qualities (texture, light, air quality, sound, smell) as well as the seemingly imperceptible affective qualities saturating particular places (corridors, rooms, libraries), and key transitional thresholds between public/private and safe/vulnerable and calm/chaos. Maps were generated through participatory workshops and walking interviews with students and staff investigating flow patterns, sonic environments, panoptic gazes and hiding places. Our findings also include new methods for integrating semantic data about school experience, including public access school data, with situated ethnographic data emerging from the site, by layering these data sources in mapping experiments, that show links between the building and the ‘outside’, including the immediate surrounding environs (wind tunnels, gardens, shops), student transit maps to and from school. Mapping techniques are borrowed from the fields of spatial studies (Kurgan, 2013), with focus on “adaptive architecture”, “lived architecture” (Jägar, 2017, 2018), and “synaesthetic architecture” (Pérez-Gómez, 2016, Pallasmaa, 2005). The data reveals how students and staff craft complex relationships with the learning environment, and that spatial habits reshape the building and re-configure the network of rooms and exits, as an evolving more-than-human ecology of heterogeneous “matters of concern” (Latour, 2005). The maps expose the topologically contorted “life of the building” (Yaneva, 2012).

Our project builds on sociological post-occupancy studies which have shed light on problems in school architecture (Daniels et al, 2019a), and draws on our expertise in sensory ethnography, data visualization, and participatory research methods with

young people (de Freitas & Roussel, 2021; Trafi-Prats & Fendler, 2020). Research on perception and the eco-cognitive ways in which students integrate sensory stimuli, and the extent to which sensory congruence is desirable, informs our attention to affect, emotion, and embodied spatial practices in schools (Bruno & Pavani, 2018; Chen & Spence, 2017). We characterize our participatory work in terms of “sense hacking” (Spence, 2021) because we destabilize the conventional ways in which architecture is experienced. This project is framed by theories of spatial justice (Kurgan, 2013; Saldiarraga et al, 2017) and investigative aesthetics (Fuller & Weizmann, 2021), which use data visualization to show how the built environment facilitates different kinds of agency and participation. We also draw on theories of critical cartography (Crampton & Krygier, 2005) to help educators think differently about learning environments as “socio-spatial assemblages” (Dovey & Fisher, 2014).

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**“Sorting out the handlebar stuff is the biggest part of the build.” Becoming and being a cycle mechanic – an ethnography of a cycle workshop**

Working as a cycle mechanic requires specialist knowledge, an understanding of mechanics, a thorough grasp of a specialist terminology, capability in the use of specific tools for specific purposes, and the ability to diagnose mechanical and sometimes electrical problems. It also requires the ability to explain sometimes complex processes in lay terms to customers, the navigation of electronic point-of-sale computer software and workshop booking systems, ordering spare parts from suppliers, and challenging manufacturers to put things right when mistakes have been made on a factory production line. It is a complex occupation involving a number of practices and ways of knowing.

In this paper I draw on findings from my ethnography of a cycle workshop in order to begin exploring the networks of practice that can be found in just one physical location. Starting from the relatively mundane task of unboxing a new bike in order to build it and prepare it for shop display, I show how the practices and ways of knowing of the cycle mechanic, both tacit and explicit, are instantiated through talking, the use of tools, and the evaluation of objectivised knowledge, all stemming from workshop experience, self-directed learning, and formal workplace qualifications. I also use my analysis to argue that the continued categorisation of ways on knowing into ‘academic’ and ‘technical/vocational’ is a false dichotomy. Being a cycle mechanic is to be enrolled within a rich, complex and heterogeneous network of people as well as things that deserves to be accounted for and understood.

With this paper I hope to make an empirical contribution but also a theoretical/conceptual contribution through the application of the philosophical anthropology of Bruno Latour, the work of whom is I argue under-used in comparison to other theorists such as Bourdieu and Foucault.

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### **Using Institutional Ethnography to Illuminate the Contested Space of Grades in Higher Education: Ruling Relations and Grades as Texts**

This article identifies the role grades (marking in international contexts) play as regulatory text mediating ruling relations within U.S. higher education institutions. IE is a method of inquiry that starts with an individual's experience, then traces how their experience is coordinated to organizational processes and social relations. Taking an IE approach, this article aims to illustrate how grades are "activated" as an institutional regulatory text that constitutes the context for faculty actions, decisions, and thinking. This study begins to explicate how grades discursively organize faculty experience consistent with a neoliberal regime of accountability. The author argues that traditional "grades" (A-F) and by extension GPA in U.S. universities, not only erases aspects of the actual labor of faculty involved in preparing and teaching courses but also creates a conflict of values for faculty navigating institutional surveillance through grading policy. IE methodology illuminates the taken-for-granted text-mediated faculty actions activated by an institutional discourse embedded in grading policy that both reproduces and buttresses neoliberal ideology in higher education audit culture.

Conceptualized as a "regulatory text" in the IE framework, the findings in this paper illuminate how this "text" (grades) shapes faculty work tasks in higher education to shift their professional knowledge and interests (often unknowingly) to the interests of ruling relations from afar. In the IE ontology, the text speaks for the institution; texts exert control and regulate people's work in institutional settings. In my analysis, I explicate how grades act as a "regulating text" in faculty's daily activities, thus faculty in higher education institutions become agents of the text/grade and by extension the ruling relations of the institution the text embodies. Faculty's work tasks, in this case grading students' achievements, are shaped by the institution's audit regime and yet come to seem "natural" as the only way tasks could be done.

Why does this matter? While there is much debate about "reforming" higher education, I stand with Dorothy Smith in the belief that if we are going to change social experience we have to first explicate experience – reveal what is shaping that experience. This study will show how IE methodology helps illuminate how grades, when conceptualized as a text, coordinate faculty activities, decisions, and sequential events, and subsequently, accomplish the coordination and control that supports neoliberal higher education institutional interests. This article demonstrates how institutional ethnography (IE) provides a way forward for those interested in "re-visioning" higher education to understand how neoliberal social policies shape and infiltrate faculty's daily work.

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### **The Voice of Google. An ethnography of the role of cloud-based collaborative technologies in the formation of primary classroom practices**

This paper explores the role of cloud-based collaborative technologies within the textual and discursive literacy practices which shape teachers' classroom practices. Part of a wider ethnography of the development of teachers' classroom practices in a primary school in the north of England, this paper draws on observations, field notes, interview transcripts and documentary data from fieldwork conducted during a four month period in the 2017-2018 academic year. Using ethnographic data, this paper describes how a suite of collaborative technologies developed by Google - Google Slides, Google Drive, Google Classroom – is used by teachers during collaborative agreement of a shared understanding of practices. Bringing together concepts from actor-network theory and literacy studies, this paper provides an in-depth view of interactions between teachers and the collaborative technologies. These interactions are positioned as literacy events (Barton, 2007) in which teachers discursively generate a shared understanding around classroom practices through textually-mediated discussions involving the reading or creation of new online texts, facilitated by collaborative technologies. Each literacy event is seen as part of a wider actor-network (Latour, 2005) of shared understanding around classroom practices; an assemblage (Latour, 2005) of people and things who act in association to effect the shared understanding of classroom practices existent within the school. Within this assemblage, collaborative technologies and the teachers involved in each literacy event are positioned as actors whose complex associative relationships exert influence upon each other and upon the resulting understanding of classroom practices. Specific functions of collaborative technologies are explored as influencing teachers' meaning-generation, mediating professional discussions in which a shared understanding of practices is formed. Conversely, this paper describes how teachers in turn shape the ways in which the technologies are enrolled (Callon, 1986) into their collaborative meaning-making, activating the agency of particular technologies. In this way, collaborative technologies and teachers are seen as co-constructing classroom practices, with technologies mediating the formation of classroom practices, whilst the teachers using the technologies mediate the influence of the technologies. This paper concludes that to understand how teachers form shared understandings of their classroom practices, we must, as part of this, examine the co-influential relationship between the technologies of professional collaboration and the collective understanding of professional praxis existent within the institution.

We live in an increasingly connected world in which teachers collaborate through the use of collaborative technologies both in virtual spaces and as part of face-to-face discussions around their practices. Emerging from the perspective presented in this

paper is an argument for greater consideration of the mediating relationship between technologies used in teacher collaboration and the teachers themselves in shaping the processes and outcomes of professional collaboration. The detail that an ethnographic view of this relationship affords allows for closer inspection of the collaborative process and thus more informed dialogue around the nature of teacher collaboration and how to best facilitate its intended outcomes. This perspective thus contributes to both the development of teachers' collaborative working habits and to further ethnographic studies of the professional practices of teachers.

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### **Outdoor Education in an Ethnographic Perspective: Exploring how Student Teachers experience 'Outdoor Education' in a Danish Setting**

Udeskole (literally meaning 'Outdoor school') is a term used to describe a form of Outdoor-based Education that is blossoming in the Scandinavian area (Bentsen et al., 2018). The dissemination of this experiential and place-based learning approach has been widely developing in schools, during the last decade (Christensen, 2004; The Forest in the School, 2008); alongside the academic environment (Bentsen et al., 2018).

This paper focuses on a single case field study at Local University College in Denmark (pseudonymized as LUC), where Udeskole gradually became a topic of an extracurricular course for student teachers.

The ethnographic analysis is part of a PhD project conducted by an Italian PhD student, during her internship in Denmark. The reader, along the analysis, will be introduced to the urgency of finding a balance between the two different poles of the participation spectrum by Gold's 'typology of research roles' (Reeves et al., 2013). In this case, from a complete participant level (behaving like a student at the course) to a complete observer (being an external eye of the Danish context to enlighten the tacit knowledge of the participants while embodying a sense of objectivity as a researcher who is also an Early Years and Primary school teacher).

The current research is guided by the following question: what are the meanings of the 'Outdoor Education' seen from different levels and perspectives? How is it enacted and shaped from text to action?

The levels under analysis will be the following:

- The 'Outdoor Education' in the Nordic scenario: how nature is used and understood in a Scandinavian and global context.
- Potentials of the Outdoor Education applied in a pedagogical context as an important and useful framework for pedagogical work with kids.
- How student teachers experience Outdoor Education: relationship and understanding of nature seen from an international perspective.

Several positive outcomes to pupils have been attributed to Udeskole, including academic, personal, social, and physiological benefits (Bentsen et al., 2018). During

the recursion between gathering data in the fieldwork and their analysis, following James Spradley's approach, the researcher accomplished that 'Outdoor Education' has several benefits also for student teachers (Spradley, 1979; Spradley, 2006); moreover, it is useful for understanding how the curricular subjects become concrete and bring new perspectives, since all the knowledge is explored in a real-life context. Examining the enactment of the Outdoor Education, along different levels by using the "policy cycle" by Stephen Ball, the researcher understands the objective of including the external learning environment in student teachers' experience at LUC (Ball et al. 2012).

This paper underlines how ethnography, in particular, is appropriate for the investigation of many aspects of learning and teaching as there are strong similarities between the way people learn and the activities of conducting ethnographic research (Walford et al., 2008). This work aims to highlight the culture of the 'Outdoor Education' in Denmark, through different levels, appreciating its uniqueness and complexity, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts giving voice to the participants' experiences.

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### **Exploring the influence of ethnographic research in digital teaching practices of disadvantaged schools**

Digitalisation has had a growing impact on the educational practices for over three decades now, with effects on teaching practices in schools. Ethnographic research has documented some of the effects but often from a neutral perspective of non-political, non-partisan participant observer-recorder reporter of unfolding events. Our more specific objective is different to this. It is to identify how different ethnographic studies can influence educational knowledge regarding the subject of digitalisation of teaching practices in disadvantaged schools in a global context. It relates to ethnographers become involved in research for improving digitalisation teaching practices in disadvantaged schools. The aim is to analyse how interaction between researchers and teachers can influence both the unfolding research process, the practices that are researched and the perspectives held by teachers in schools to these ends.

The paper adopts a critical ethnographic perspective influenced by transformation theory and concepts of catalytic validity (Lather, 1986), conscientization (Freire, 1970) and ethnographic explanatory critique (Maisuria and Beach, 2018). The concept of double inscription, where critical research for social transformation changes things, but it also changes itself as well, is central.

The paper derives from ethnographic research about digitalisation in disadvantaged schools, in rural and urban locations, and private and public schools in Spain, during the period 2008-2020, but concentrates on the opportunities that this research produced at different times. The analysis is based on showing digital teaching practices that emerge at the grass-roots level in different schools and classrooms from the everyday practices of teachers and pupils and aims to penetrate the policy-practice interface in the evaluation of educational innovations.

The results so far show how different political, cultural and educational contexts have promoted or restricted inclusive experiences of digitalisation from a material perspective.

Ethnographic educational research in global and local contexts could contribute to generalize and to challenge old and form new general case narratives of education digitalisation for social transformation in a globalizing world. Whole libraries, vast banks of knowledge and multimedia resources are available via an object that fits in our pockets and functions also as a camera, a recording device, a film-editor and a means to talk in pairs or groups with people all over the world. Contributing knowledge about using ethnography to develop positive use values of digital devices and education digitalization for disadvantaged groups is the paper's ambition.

## **Exploring the influence of ethnographic research in digital teaching practices of disadvantaged schools**

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## **Exploring young people's perceptions of inequality and access to wider opportunities at school during a time of Covid**

The focus on education for this project is driven by the weight of responsibility schools have in shaping, moulding and socialising young people. Education systems as have largely turned a blind eye to the needs of marginalised groups (McGregor and Mills, 2012) and with the sheer force with which Covid-19 has hit the world, it is more pertinent than ever for educational institutions to support all young people. In order to do this, schools must understand what 'barriers' exist both socially and institutionally so that the system might change to better meet the needs of marginalised students and in turn, all students.

This paper will highlight the lived experiences of a group of young people at one British school in the north of the country, going to school and living through, and taking part in ethnographic research during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project is still in its preliminary data collection stages though a number of participatory methods have been employed to explore young peoples' experiences of education. An ethnography has been employed as the main research method, highlighting the importance of access, participation, and ethics in a Covid-19 world. Ethnographies are an important tool when understanding individual experience, especially for young people, as it allows for flexibility, observation and rapport building within a research setting (Russell, 2013).

This project aims to fill a knowledge gap that addresses young people's experiences of inequality on an individual level. The insight I hope to gain will offer a unique perspective of young people's experiences of inequality both before and after the worldwide spread of Coronavirus and the changing sands that is the new 'normal'.

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### **Embodying educational hopes: Syrian refugees' higher education pursuits in Lebanon and Jordan**

While school-level education is considered a right and its protective role in displacement emphasized, higher education provision via the refugee mandate had been once very limited and only provided to “the most deserving refugees” (UNHCR. 2007. Education strategy 2007-2009, p. 16 note 11). The narratives of deservingness foreground refugees' experiences of conflict and suffering of displacement. Refugee students often have to demonstrate their exceptionality, resilience and the experiences of hardships. Their hope for educational opportunity is portrayed as heroic and bearing the great mission of contributing to the future reconstruction of their country. The task of this paper is to complicate such images and ground the understanding of higher education as a hope that is situated in the everyday and enmeshed in the acts of commuting, participating and networking.

Contrary to the heroic representation of refugees in higher education and the expectations laden with the future of “return and rebuild” or as employable subjects, educational hopes are embodied in the everyday ordinary actions as they seek meaningful participation. Nevertheless, what might be experienced as hiccups and disruptions throughout students' educational pursuits is often induced by the distinction and identification of being a Syrian/refugee. The distinction is not only enacted through legal and bureaucratic procedures of documentation for school registration and exam sittings, but also through the circulation of the success story and, at times, the researcher's gaze on the Syrian refugee as a subject—and her hope of another success story. While the jointly constructed hope of an exceptional story may spark hopeful visions at times, it also tends to remove the subjects from their contexts, the ones that are unable to provide for practical steps towards the hoped-for future. As educational pursuits imply an investment of not only efforts and resources but also emotions, a failed pursuit may therefore lead to a “heartbreak”.

The paper furthers the understanding of higher education pursuits in refugee contexts in the Global South. It extends the literature on the “futureless and exceptional” refugee education (Brun and Shuayb 2020) by showing how refugees constantly negotiate the exceptionality and urgency repeatedly inscribed by humanitarian discourses. It contributes to the emerging literature on refugee students' experiences and responses in negotiating multiple expectations in higher education (Bellino 2018; Fert 2020). Through examining my own hopes as a researcher and how our expectations—the interlocutors' and mine—shape the research relationship and our interactions, the paper contributes to the understanding of researcher' role in the field as she tries to make herself useful (Wu, 2022).

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### **Generative Meaning Making in Technology-Mediated Ethnographic Research with Children: Rethinking the Center-periphery Imaginary**

We propose to critically engage the idea of “centering children’s voices” in qualitative research by situating our research practice in a context mediated by digital technology. In the COVID19 pandemic era, children’s relationship with digital technology is both rapidly changing and contentious. On the one hand, children’s exposure to screens is still heavily controlled, surveilled and sanitized, and on the other, many children rely on digital technology to access remote learning. Although the pandemic is fading (hopefully), the fraught relationship between children and digital technology remains as an increasingly digitalized world emerges from the pandemic. In this paper, we address the questions of in what sense digital technology could be integrated into ethnographic research with children and what it means to empower children in a digital-technology-mediated environment.

We use our multi-sited ethnographic work with transnational Chinese children and their families during the pandemic as an example to explore the aforementioned questions. To better engage children and democratize the research process, we integrated reading a pandemic-themed picture book, *Outside, Inside* (LeUyen, 2021), into Zoom interviews with young children (5-10 years old). When reading, viewing, and interviewing/chatting converged in the technology-mediated space, interviewing with children becomes a constellation of children, adults, books, and digital equipment, which in turn creates conditions for generative meaning making on the affective, inferential, and acoustic levels.

If a typical semi-structured Zoom interview is mainly structured around questions, probes, and answers, we demonstrated a possibility of incorporating other interactive approaches into a digital-technology-mediated space and identified moments when children were actively engaged in various levels of meaning-making: through viewing the book, reading aloud the illustration of the book, answering questions from the adult researcher, negotiating with the adult researchers on the meanings of the book and their lived experience, and interacting with their parents, who often played the roles of interpreter or facilitator. In particular, we highlighted those examples when we as researchers could more intentionally create space and opportunities for children to voice their interpretations, to push back our taken-for-granted assumptions, and to negotiate, either implicitly or explicitly, with the adult figures in their life. This technology-mediated interview condition is further intersected and



connected with a larger social, cultural and political condition, which, following anthropologist Ghassan Hage, we tentatively called the diasporic condition (Hage, 2021).

We contend that the expression of “centering children’s voices” heavily relies on a spatial analogy, which places children’s voices at the center and creates a center-periphery imaginary. Our research has shown more nuances in working with children in a digital-technology-mediated study, shifting the focus from centering a pre-existing voice to creating conditions for the becoming of more agentic children and for the empowerment of children. We concluded our paper with thoughts and reflections on working with children in an increasingly digitalized post-pandemic world.

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