

# Exploring research methodologies and paradigms within pedagogical research – what, why, when, how, who(m) and where

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‘Transitioning into Pedagogical Research – Dual Identities and Discipline Spanning’ – Workshop 1 - SRHE HQ, Kings Cross, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2017

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# Aims

- The workshop today is about transitioning into pedagogical research and examining dual identities and discipline spanning (Nind et al, 2016).
- Examine paradigms (Cohen et al, 2011) – Positivism and Constructionism (Creswell, 2012).
- Going to look at methods and methodology – the what, why, when, how, who(m) and where – (Bryman, 2016).

# Transitioning into Pedagogical Research

... pedagogy has frequently been positioned in contrast to knowledge and the specified curriculum, so the complexities and subtleties of supporting and learning of learners, could, in this view, be consigned to irrelevancy and invisibility. In being underrated in the past, pedagogy was therefore underexplored and certainly under theorized. Pedagogy has surfaced in more recent times as a vital area of professional practice and research. It is increasingly recognized as complex and important, and teachers are seen as requiring professional expertise.

Nind et al, 2016: 1

# Workshop Exercise 1

- How complex is pedagogy? Give examples from your own practice and research.
- How much professional expertise should a teacher / lecturer possess (Race, 2015)?
- Is pedagogy easy or difficult to research?
- Does teaching inform research? Does research inform teaching?

# What is a paradigm?

A paradigm is a way at looking at or researching phenomena, a world view, a view of what counts as accepted or current scientific knowledge or way of working, an 'accepted model or pattern' (Kuhn, 1962:23), a shared belief system or set of principles, the identity of a research community, a way of pursuing knowledge, consensus on what problems are to be investigated and how to investigate them, typical solutions to problems, and an understanding that is more acceptable than its rivals.

Cohen et al, 2011: 5.

# Positivism

[Comte's] ... positivism turns to observation and reason as means of understanding behaviour, explanation proceeds by way of scientific description ... all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment ... rigours orientation to social facts and natural phenomena to be investigated empirically (Natural order vs. Human complexity).

Cohen et al, 2011: 7

# Constructivism

- Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting ...
- Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives – we are all both into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture.
- The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community.

Creswell, 2012: 8-9.

# Workshop Exercise 2

- What simple observations and experiments can we make of the world around us today in May 2017?
- How do we make meaning(s) of the world around us? Is the basic generation of meaning only social?
- Where does contestation begin between the natural order and human complexity?
- In relation to transition, are you using the same paradigms and have you had to change your paradigm with a new research focus?

# Methods and Methodology

- In data collection terms, methods are the tools you use to collect data, they can be quantitative; qualitative or mixed methods. Methodology is how researchers or you in your research will use the tools e.g. questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, samples or secondary data evidence.

# Workshop Exercise 3

- How, by using data, can you be critical of the [education] world around us in May 2017?
- In your research, what paradigm would you or are you using and by applying this, how has this shaped the design of your project?
- Within your research, what methods are you using to collect your data and what methodology are you developing?
- In relation to transition, have you had to change your methods of data collection and consequent methodology?

# Summary

Simon will continue the methods and methodology debate when he looks at Action Research after lunch. Reflect on your roles as a pedagogical researcher. Think about pedagogy. What does it mean to you and how is it shaping your research? The science of education, I would argue is more than just teaching, learning and research. It's giving all practitioners the time and the opportunity to Continually Professional Develop (CPD). This enables transition but allows our development as professional practitioners. This is partly why you are here today at SRHE.

# Selected References

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- Nind, M., Curtin, A., Hall, K. (2016) *Research Methods for Pedagogy*, London, Bloomsbury.
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