

B111: INDIVIDUAL PAPERS: Ethnographic Seriality: Research grappling with issues of time

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Today's educational researchers live and work in a world that seems to be reminiscent of James Gleick's (2000) book *Faster: The acceleration of just about everything*. Time poverty has become the norm and academics generally work under enormous pressures in their attempts to respond to both institutional and external demands for high performance. It is probably not surprising, then, that there are likely to be effects on the types of research that are conducted. In particular, educational ethnography in the tradition of, for example, Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) initial ten year study of *Ways with Words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms* has become problematic for research beyond initial doctoral research programs.

This paper considers current ethnographic research and the use of longitudinality (e.g. Weis, 2004) and time-scales (e.g. Lemke, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2011) as ways of exploring people's lives over time. Drawing on the authors' experiences of doing literacy research in schools, the paper works with the notion of seriality. It considers the implications and possibilities of data collection as a serial process, conducted at time intervals, as an alternative to spending extended periods of time in the field. It also discusses ethical considerations related to returning to research sites, and the problematics of reporting data findings and working with participants in ways that balance beneficence and risk appropriately. The paper works to unpack ethnographic seriality and its implications for ethnography as a method.

References

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