Poster Abstract Book (All Poster)

0242

Changing Spaces: sociomateriality and learning spaces during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Abstract: This poster presents findings from a research project which aimed to understand student and staff perceptions of their changed learning and teaching spaces, necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in England. The qualitative case-study adopted and creative photo voice methods, alongside focus groups and interviews, to enable participants to direct the scope of the research and to prompt reflection of what their spaces mean to them and their learning and teaching practice. This poster presentation will report on some of the key findings from student participants, which were analysed utilising the theoretical lens of sociomateriality. Delegates will be encouraged to engage with the questions the research presents around future learning and teaching spaces, in particular considering belonging, pedagogy and wellbeing.

Poster Outline: The central research questions for the poster are:

1. What can we learn about students' perceptions of how their institution has supported the imposed changes?
2. How have students perceived their experiences of their changing learning spaces?

The poster will outline the theoretical framework presented by sociomateriality (Acton, 2017), including how it was utilised in this study. Sociomateriality explores the relationship between material objects and human interaction. In an educational research context, sociomateriality is utilised to analyse the impact of internalised understandings of educational spaces and the impact of power dynamics on individual action and belonging (Fenwick, 2015). Five themes from the findings will be identified and outlined. These include: meaning given to objects/spaces, impact on learning, power dynamics, inclusive spaces and community participation. Dealing with each of these in turn, the first theme refers to participants' ascriptions of meaning to their learning spaces and the objects within them; for instance, the artefacts and/or spaces that they associate with their identities as students. The second, impact on learning, considers how participants feel remote delivery has impacted on their learning experiences. Third, power dynamics examines how participants conceptualise the shifting settings of their learning environment. The final two themes focus more strongly on wellbeing. The research considers how decentralisation of teaching from a relatively 'neutral' space to the personal socio-cultural and economic environments of individual students may impact on inclusivity. The final theme of community participation explores how the dissipation of the student body has impacted on participants' learning communities.

The project's qualitative methodology will also be explored in detail, including how the researchers utilised creative methodologies to answer their central research questions. Photovoice methods were employed to re-focus attention on the material aspects of spaces and to facilitate reflection on

the meanings ascribed to both the locale itself and the objects within it (Sutton-Brown, 2014). Conclusions will consider the implications of the findings for higher education at both the micro and macro-level of pedagogic practice and institutional policy.

Poster References: Acton, R. (2017). Place-people-practice-process: Using sociomateriality in university physical spaces research. Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49(14), 1441-1451.

Fenwick, T. (2015). Sociomateriality and learning: A critical approach. In Scott, D., & Hargreaves, E. (eds.) The Sage Handbook of Learning. London: Sage Publications. 83-93

Sutton-Brown, C. A. (2014). Photovoice: A methodological guide. *Photography and Culture*, *7*(2), 169-185.