



Using ethnography in the local context: Focusing on literacy and identity

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Abstract

The relationship between ethnography and the New Literacy Studies can be described as symbiotic (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). Ethnographic perspectives have enriched the ways in which literacy or literacies have been researched. The aim of this presentation is to share with you my experience of using ethnographic perspectives and ethnographic tools for the research that I have carried out. Drawing upon data collection experiences in a local preschool and in Sunni madrassahs, I will discuss the identity related issues that I faced and engaged with as I tried to access reliable data. I will also reflect on the notion of 'insider-outsider perspective'. While the literature suggests that ethnographic researchers should distance themselves from the object of study, I (with the help of a co-researcher) will discuss the challenges that this entails and discuss the ways in which collaborative research can contribute to a richer understanding of social/literacy phenomena in complex multi-ethnic contexts like Mauritius.

Friday 21 February 2014

15 hrs 30

Frank Richard Lecture Theatre

RESEARCH SEMINAR