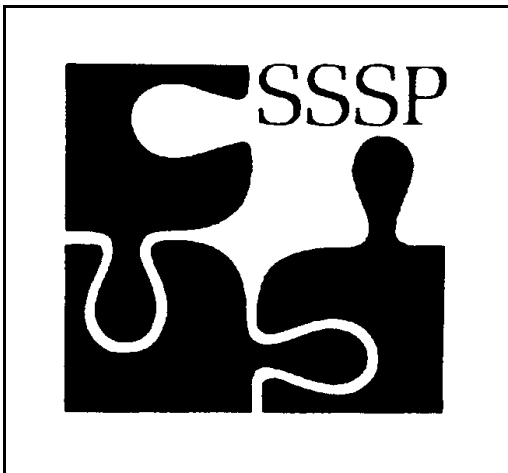


IE NEWSLETTER

Institutional Ethnography Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

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FROM THE DIVISION CHAIR

Kamini Maraj Grahame

Hello everyone. Summer in Atlanta is fast approaching and the preliminary program has been posted. Our division is well represented with sessions that include work by seasoned scholars as well as new. I expect that our sessions will be well attended this year as they have in the past. We are very pleased that Dorothy Smith will again be a participant in this year's meeting. No doubt you will take full advantage of the opportunities this meeting presents to share and learn in our joint enterprise of doing institutional ethnography. A full listing of the sessions (including co-sponsored sessions) begins on page 6.

For those who are new to the SSSP, division meetings are great places to meet and engage with other scholars in the field. Our division meeting enjoys robust attendance and is typically a lively event where we celebrate award winners, plan for the following year, meet new people and catch up with long-time colleagues and friends. The division meeting is scheduled for Saturday, August 14 from 12:30 – 2:10 pm. The joint division reception on Friday August 13 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm provides a convivial space to meet people. Come chill out and enjoy some good food and drink.

I'd like to encourage you to start thinking about sessions for next year. It is especially useful for me to have a sense of the co-sponsored sessions that folks might be thinking about as the other division chairs have to be asked to co-sponsor. As always, we are open to suggestions for new formats for sessions. For the first time this year, we have a roundtable. In addition, we are continuing the "new research in institutional ethnography" session.

Our in-coming chair-elect for the division is Janet Rankin, University of Calgary. Janet will serve as Division Chair from 2011 – 2013. Thank you for taking the time to vote.

I am pleased to be able to announce the award winners in this newsletter.

(continued)

(Division Chair's message continued)

The recipient of the George Smith Award for Outstanding Student Paper is Li-Fang Liang, Syracuse University. Susan Turner is the recipient of the Dorothy E. Smith for Scholar/Activism. I'd like to thank students for submitting their papers to the competition and division members for their nominations for the scholar/activist award. Many thanks to Liza McCoy and Alejandra Gabriel for their work in reviewing papers and Tim Diamond and Chris Wellin for reviewing nominations for the Dorothy E. Smith award. I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta.

Institutional ethnography and new literacy studies

-by Richard Darville

It is a rare pleasure to be able to connect literacy as social practices and institutional ethnography, in one discussion. I didn't go looking for ways to use IE in literacy teaching. It hit me on the head. I came to see that some kinds of (sometimes essential) literacy teaching go on with texts that are experience-telling, that move through what people live through. Experiential stories and recipes are prototypical. Of course texts like these work within social relations, but those relations are usually familiar and don't require any figuring out. But for very many other texts, the ways that texts fit into social relations often does require some figuring out. Those texts are institutional – carrying the objectified knowledges of government agencies, labour markets, media, and so on. Learning to read *them* likely takes attention that goes beyond the surface of the texts to what standpoints they take, what they're assuming but not saying, what they include and what they leave out – an array of concerns talked about in such casual terms as “what they're looking for,” “where it comes from,” “what you're getting into.”

How are literacy work and literacy practices hooked into governance? I've come to see the ensemble of governmental, administrative, academic and media processes that aim both to promote literacy and to regulate its development as an *adult literacy regime*. I've been driven to study it – as a reader of media and policy depictions of literacy that seem just *bizarre*, as an advocate sucked into making arguments that sell, and distressed at accountability procedures that seem almost designed to squeeze the continual invention out of good literacy work.

The central regime discourse is pushed through the OECD but echoed across European and Anglo-Saxon nations. It views society through a version of human capital theory, conceiving every form of human knowledge and ability in terms of its economic usefulness, as a “stock of skills.” For adult literacy the key carrier of this discourse has been the population-level literacy testing known as IALS(S). IALS does not assess traditionally conceived literacy skills, but “information-processing” – performing predefined tasks that require locating and combining bits of information, and doing operations with that information. IALS famously asserts that “level 3” is required for our knowledge economy, and says that 48 per cent of Canadians 16 and over don't have it. This claim is routinely corrupted to say that these people struggle with everyday tasks. What IALS actually claims is that, below level 3, people don't have a “predictable capacity” to perform an array of information-using tasks of moderate complexity, almost certainly including tasks that are not everyday for them. It's what musicians call “sight-reading.” This construct is profoundly embedded in human capital accounting. IALS' adaptable level 3 readers on the other hand, are the counterpart of management discourses' flexible, retrainable workers. They are ready immediately to conduct tasks that someone else has determined – but not (as literacy workers might say) to “read the world” from which those tasks come.

In this way, literacy rates are a “policy object.” They are purely textual phenomena, existing only

(continued)

(IE and new literacy studies continued)

through policy discourse and technologies. Policy orients to literacy rates as they correlate with other objects of policy interest – individual income and health, unemployment or social assistance rates, even GDP. These associations become rationales for “investments” of public resources. The literacy as human capital discourse is now nearly ubiquitous in media discussions, policy proposals and research, and even advocacy organizations’ efforts to promote “the issue.” This discourse’s (transnational) prevalence is part of what leads to descriptions of the OECD as the *éminence grise* of education policy. But the OECD also exerts force through “governance by data,” and through national self- and mutual surveillance. With IALS – of course like PISA and other “indicators” – league tables are made, comparing nations and provinces. These become the measure of successful policies and effective programs – those that get the numbers better, and the relative rankings higher. The data on literacy as a resource for competitiveness instigate competition, and displace other reckonings of how literacy is a social good.

This has not led in Canada – as it has in the UK – to a major strategy for increasing literacy, serious work at drawing people into programs, or expansions of diverse forms of research. It has though led to a firming of the Canadian Government, the regime’s, regulatory grip, through an intensifying development of program accountability and curricular devices, aligned with models of public management which insist on “performance outcomes measurement.” While not actually requiring IALS-like testing, accountability and curricular devices construe “what counts as” literacy as individuated, decontextualized, hierarchically ranked skills. So *literacy programs and literacy workers* come to be administratively accountable for producing something like the policy object called “literacy.” They are required to describe what they do – and what learners gain – in terms devised for their governance.

What can IE contribute to this problematic? IE studies make it easier to see what local literacy

invention is up against – how it happens that policy is so split from practice, and how accountability data don’t tell what’s actually going on in literacy work, and certainly don’t tell how to do it. There need to be systematic accounts of literacy work produced by and for those doing it, and in dialogue with diverse local invention. Social practice analyses of literacy should be mainstay resources for these. Among researchers and literacy workers, we know a lot about what gains are actually most important in literacy work ... say, people using authentic texts both in programs and in their lives outside, and getting more familiar with how texts work and more confident about engaging with them and with text-related forms of talk and action. These actually important gains should be publicly juxtaposed to quantified skills gains, and might even horn in on their space. There is indeed researcher and practitioner push for broadening the scope of accountability – including “non-academic outcomes” like confidence and “social capital,” or increased text-use. (There is a second push for reducing the paperwork burden of accountability requirements. The first may contradict the second). Then there’s the utopian imagination of a project of adult literacy governed differently, perhaps by a “right to literacy” – recognized in Canada or transnationally. A right to literacy on its own, and as a prerequisite to other rights to security and to democratic capacity. A right to develop literacy in ways that are locally sensible, shaped by people themselves. A right to develop literacy in ways that take up, rather than erase, “intractable problems of inequality, social exclusion and social injustice.” That different ruling discourse also needs a push.

New members

Welcome to our new members who have joined the Division since our last edition.

Kathryn Forbes
Dawna Lee Rumball
Maureen Steinell
Berit Vannebo

Research in progress

-by Ali Gabriel

Patti Hamilton of Midwestern State University in Texas is leading an institutional ethnography (IE) project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative (INQRI). SSSP member Marie Campbell serves as the IE expert on the project, while SSSP member Ali Gabriel works as an IE researcher. For more than 30 years, weekend and/or night time hospitalizations have been associated with higher mortality rates for persons going to a hospital for assistance with heart attacks, strokes, childbirth and over 20 other categories identified by researchers in multiple countries. Over the years, descriptive studies have verified the presence of this “off-peak” (nights and weekends) effect in 25 patient diagnostic categories but have done little to explain or correct its causes. Beginning with nurses’ experiences we are studying what happens on off-peak shifts that may lead to negative patient outcomes. Our IE inquiry aims to bring the institutional complex into view, as it organizes nurses’ work, the workplace and, indeed, the lives of other health care workers and patients.

Our first scientific publication “Expanding what we know about off-peak mortality in hospitals” appears in the *Journal of Nursing Administration* 40(1) 124-128, 2010. The research to date has uncovered a number of institutional intersections that may be addressed to improve the experiences of hospital patients. Visit our website at www.nursingopen247.com for more information about the study.

New publications

Article:

Hicks, S. (2009). Sexuality and the ‘relations of ruling’: Using institutional ethnography to research lesbian and gay foster care and adoption. *Social Work and Society* 7(2). Available at <http://www.socwork.net/2009/2/articles/hicks>

This article makes use of institutional ethnography to research foster care and adoption by lesbians and gay men, drawing on the work of the feminist sociologist Dorothy E. Smith in order to demonstrate the investigation of social work institutional categories and the relations of ruling. Through an analysis of the ways in which gender and the idea of the gender role model is used within the assessment of gay and lesbian foster carers and adopters, the author shows how these categories are produced and used to police relationship forms and to identify deviant instances.

Book chapter:

Stooke, R. K. (2010). Investigating the textually mediated work of institutions: Dorothy E. Smith’s sociology for people. In G. Leckie, L. Given & J. E. Buschman (Eds.), *Critical theory for library and information science: Exploring the social from across the disciplines*, pp. 283-294. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

The chapter contains an overview of Dorothy Smith’s career, introductions to her ideas on social organization of knowledge and institutional ethnography, and a discussion on the relevance of her work to library and information science research and practice.

IE in Massachusetts

-by Marj DeVault

On March 17, Dorothy Smith, Alison Griffith, and Marj DeVault offered a workshop on institutional ethnography for faculty and students in Women's and Gender Studies at Wellesley College. The workshop was organized by Professor. Rosanna Hertz, who was the 2009-2010 President of the Eastern Sociological Society.

Later in the week (March 19), Smith and Griffith joined Nancy Naples at the ESS Annual Meeting in Boston on an institutional ethnography panel which was organized by Marj DeVault. We discussed how each panelist was introduced to institutional ethnography (Nancy talked about finding Smith's *Feminism and Marxism: A place to begin, a way to*

go, published in 1977, in a New York City bookstore, and Alison recalled a women's studies course at the University of British Columbia), and how we now see it being used. Dorothy spoke about how the focus on textual coordination opens up possibilities for analysis of the emergent "managerial state" and Alison gave an account of the collaborative work on governance that she and Dorothy have recently begun. Nancy spoke about the potential of institutional ethnographic analyses to contribute to social justice work and how her students have been using the approach. About 60 people attended the session, and Kamini Grahame was there as well, to promote our SSSP Division.

IE in Montreal

The Canadian Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences met The Canadian Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences met at Concordia University in Montreal in May/June. A number of sessions of interest to the IE community were presented. A recap follows.

Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (Paper)

Graduate Student Writing: Doctoral Students' Reading-Writing Activity as Text Production. Suzanne Forgang Miller, OISE/University of Toronto s.miller@utoronto.ca

The standpoint of graduate students that I employ shifts the starting point of inquiry onto the exploration and conceptualization of graduate students' products, namely academic papers.

Canadian Society for the Study of Education (Panel Session)

Mapping Local Literacy Work to Global Policy Discourses: Institutional Ethnography, New Literacy Studies and Tools for Social Action

Chairs: Suzanne Smythe, Simon Fraser University; Rosamund Stooke, University of Western Ontario

Invited Speakers: Richard Darville, Carleton University; Mary Hamilton, Lancaster University, UK; Victoria Purcell-Gates, University of British Columbia, Dorothy E. Smith, University of Victoria

From diverse perspectives the four panelists share a common interest in mapping the dynamic relationship between local literacy work and its "ruling relations" with a view to forging literacy and social policy that takes up, rather than erases issues of inequality. sksmmythe@sfu.ca; rstooke@uwo.ca

Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (Paper)

Professionals Who Return to the Academy for Graduate Degrees in Education: Navigating Paths to Credential Acquisition. Suzanne Forgang Miller Ontario Institute for Studies in Education s.miller@utoronto.ca (continued)

(IE in Montreal continued)

This paper explores the phenomenon of ‘older’ professionals who return to university for graduate studies in education. Institutional Ethnography provides a method of inquiry to develop an account of the interdisciplinary institutional practices engaged in by doctoral student/professionals.

Canadian Sociological Association (Session with Papers)

Institutional Ethnography: Exploring Governance
Organizer: Alison Griffith, York University
agriffith@edu.yorku.ca

Over the past 20 years, institutional ethnographic studies from different disciplinary sites have been illuminating changes in governance of professional work at the front-lines of public institutions such as universities, public schools, health care and social welfare. The term governance denotes the rapidly developing forms of governing that are not identifiable with specific governments or institutions, operate across institutional and sometimes national boundaries and are being introduced largely without public scrutiny. This session focused on institutional ethnographic

studies that further the opening of windows on changes taking place in management, accountability, and financial processes across disciplinary, national, and international boundaries.

Marjorie DeVault, Murali Venkatesh, and Frank Ridzi, Syracuse University
‘Let’s Be Friends:’ Working Within an Accountability Circuit mvenkate@syr.edu

Kate Hickey, PhD Student, Department of Sociology, University of Calgary
The Work Behind ‘Waiting,’ ‘Ambivalence,’ and ‘Resistance to Care:’ Patient pathways coordinating care and working towards recovery.
hickey.k8@gmail.com

Lindsay Kerr, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
Surveillance by Statistics: The MISA/OnSIS Project in Ontario Schools lkerr@oise.utoronto.ca

Gerald deMontigny, Carleton University, Put on a Happy Face? Grievance and Governance in the New University gerald_demontigny@carleton.ca

**Society for the Study of Social Problems 60th Annual Meeting
SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK
August 13-15, 2010**

The following IE sessions are listed in the preliminary program. For more information about the Annual Meeting, please visit: <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/23>

Friday, August 13

8:30 – 10:10 am

**Session 3: Pursuing Justice: Examinations of Disparities and Marginalizing Experiences
Room: Georgia 5**

Sponsors: Institutional Ethnography & Law and Society

Organizer: Jeralyn Faris, Purdue University

Presider & Discussant: Michael K. Corman, University of Calgary

Papers:

Institutional and Organizational Challenges to Social Justice within Sports-Based Positive Youth Development Programs: Lessons from Girls on the

(IE sessions continued)

Run of Los Angeles, Lauren Rauscher, California State University Long Beach

Racial/Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice/Legal Systems' Responses to Missing

Persons, Stephen J. Morewitz, California State University, East Bay

Stigma, Culture, and Exiting Homelessness in Los Angeles and Tokyo, Matthew D. Marr, Florida International University

When Water Stops Flowing: Inequality and Technology, Wenda Bauchspies and Jennifer Green, Georgia Institute of Technology

10:30am – 12:10pm

Session 10: Doing Institutional Ethnography: Experience, Texts and the Ruling Relations (Papers in the Round)
Room: Georgia 5

Sponsor: Institutional Ethnography

Organizer & Presider: Peter R. Grahame, Pennsylvania State University – Schuylkill

Papers:

Community Homes Caring for the Intellectually Disabled, Andrea Smith-Betts, York University

The 'Rendering Technical' of 'Traditional Knowledge' under the Convention on Biological Diversity: Making Actual Activities Visible to the Policy-Making Regime, Lauren E. Eastwood, SUNY Plattsburgh

The Social Organization of Nurses' Medication Work, Louise Folkmann, University of Calgary

Who Did What, When, and How: Process Mapping as an Institutional Ethnography Tool, Alejandra K. Gabriel, Arizona State University

12:30pm – 2:10pm

Session 21: Justice for the Marginalized
Room: Georgia 5

Sponsors: Institutional Ethnography & Law and Society

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Jeralyn Faris, Purdue University

Papers:

On the Streets: The Criminalization of Survival Strategies Used by the Homeless, Sondra J. Fogel, University of South Florida and Gina Gibbs, c/o University of South Florida

Prison's Dirty Little Secret: The Law and Sexual Assault in Carceral Settings, Michael A. Smyth, Susquehanna University

Seeking Social Justice on the Margins of Rural Communities, Susan Tracey Machum, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, NB, Canada

Transgender Inmates: A Triangulated View of Cultural 'Location' in California Prisons, Jennifer Sumner, Penn State Harrisburg and Valerie Jenness, UC Irvine

2:30 – 4:10 pm

Session 29: New Research in Institutional Ethnography
Room: Georgia 5

Sponsor: Institutional Ethnography

Organizer & Presider: Jeremy L. Brunson, Gallaudet University

Papers:

An Institutional Ethnographic Study of Male Neonatal Circumcision: The Social and

(continued)

(IE sessions continued)

Institutional Discourse of Attitudes and Beliefs among Parents and Medical Personnel, Lauren Sardi Ross, Quinnipiac University

Course Outlines and Ruling Relations, Mary Ellen Dunn, University of Toronto

Mapping Work: Using Informant Generated Maps to Discover the Social Organization of Injury Management, Laurie A. Clune, Ryerson University

Quantitative Accountability and the Formalization of Control of Professional Work, Berit Irene Vannebo, Northwestern University

Surveillance in a Reentry Court: An Institutional Ethnography Begins, Jeralyn Faris, Purdue University

4:30 – 6:10pm

Session 38: Institutional Ethnography and the Work of Social Justice
Room: Georgia 5

Sponsor: Institutional Ethnography

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Lois Andre-Bechely, California State University

Papers:

From the 'Gayborhood' to the Small Town: LGBT Pride Organizations and the Mobilization of Resources, Culture and Symbolic Capital, Lauren Joseph, Stony Brook University

Queering Religion and Sexuality Within Sport, John L. Tubera and Kerrie Kauer, California State University, Long Beach

Institutional Ethnography and Text Analysis: Contributions to Social Justice Work, Lois Andre-Bechely, California State University

Institutional Ethnography Connections to Social Justice, Paul C. Luken, University of West Georgia and Suzanne Vaughan, Arizona State University

Saturday, August 14

8:00 – 9:40 am

Session 47: Labor Market Reorganization: Immigration, Globalization and Racialization
Room: Georgia 12

Sponsors: Institutional Ethnography, Labor Studies & Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Organizer & Presider: Roxana Ng, OISE/University of Toronto

Papers:

Do We Leave? Mexican Immigrants and the Economic Crisis in Elkhart County, Indiana, Lynda D. Nyce, Bluffton University

Globalization, Flexibility, and New Culture of Workplace in the Services Sector in U.S. and India, Bhavani Arabandi, George Mason University

Immigration History and Work-Related Wellbeing Among English Speaking Residents of Toronto, Janani Umamaheswar and William Magee, University of Toronto

The Postindustrial-Era Opportunity Structure and Low-skilled Black Women Worker, Katrinell M. Davis, University of Vermont

Thinking through Immigrant Women's Paid and Unpaid Work Transnationally: An Exploration in Using Institutional Ethnography to Analyze Transnational Migration and Globalization, Roxana Ng, OISE/University of Toronto, Guida Man and Tania Das Gupta, York University and Kiran Mirchandani, OISE/University of Toronto

(continued)

(IE sessions continued)

2:30 – 4:10 pm

**Session 62: Governance and Front Line Work
Room: Georgia 6**

Sponsor: Institutional Ethnography

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Alison Griffith,
York University

Papers:

*'Let's Be Friends': Accountability Circuits in
Medicaid Chronic Care Eligibility Processing,*
Marjorie L. DeVault, Maxwell School of Syracuse
University, Murali Venkatesh, Syracuse University
and Frank Ridzi, LeMoyne College

*Accountability Circuits and the Front Line Work of
Self-Governance,* Lauri Grace, Deakin University,
Cheryl Zurawski, University of Regina and
Christina Sinding, McMaster University

*Managed Professionals on the Front Line of
Emergency Services,* Michael K. Corman and Karen
Melon, University of Calgary

The Textual Coordination of Shelter Work,
Naomi Nichols, York University

2:30 – 4:10 pm

**Session 73: Governance and Front Line Work II
Room: Georgia 6**

Sponsor: Institutional Ethnography

Organizer, Presider & Discussant: Alison Griffith,
York University

Papers:

*Compliance or Complaining? Changing the Face of
University Teaching,* Mandy Frake-Mistak, York
University

Governance and Front Line Dispensary Workers
Nicole B. Balan, York University

*Parental involvement in Education: 'Volunteers' or
'Partners?'* Stephanie Therese Mazerolle, York
University, Faculty of Education

The Red Queen's Rules? Gerald de Montigny,
Carleton University

Sunday, August 15

8.30 am – 10:10am

**Session 87: Teaching Institutional Ethnography
Room: Georgia 8**

Sponsors: Institutional Ethnography & Teaching
Social Problems

Organizer & Presider: Michael K. Corman,
University of Calgary

Discussant: Paul C. Luken, University of West
Georgia

Papers:

Teaching IE: Habits of Thinking, Janet M. Rankin,
University of Calgary

The Institutional Ethnographic Dissertation,
Marjorie L. DeVault, Maxwell School of Syracuse
University

*Teaching Institutional Ethnography; Making the
Paradigm Shift,* Dorothy E. Smith, University of
Victoria

10.30 am – 12:10 pm

**Session 96: Texts, Mental Health/Disability and
the Social Organization of Inequality
Room: Georgia 8**

Sponsors: Disabilities, Institutional Ethnography &
Mental Health

(IE sessions continued)

Organizer & Presider: Janet M. Rankin, University of Calgary

Papers:

Dialogue Differences in Disability: Interviews with Primary and Secondary Informants, Laura M. Bisailon, University of Ottawa

Race, Labeling and Worker-Client Interaction in Community Mental Health Service, Kerry M. Dobransky, James Madison University

The Social Organization of Stroke Prevention, Sarah Flogen, University of Toronto

The Textual Interconnectedness of 'Accommodation' and 'Compliance': Double Jeopardy for Persons with Disabilities in the Canadian Federal Public Service, Jean Louis Deveau, Sociologist, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Sad news

Our condolences to Jeremy Brunson, whose longtime partner Kelly Mease died suddenly in March, as the result of a massive heart attack.