

RESEARCH METHODS IN CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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In The Discovery of Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967):

This book is intended to underscore the basic sociological activity that only sociologists can do: generating sociological theory. Description, ethnography, fact-finding, verification (call them what you will) are all done well by professionals in other fields and by laymen in various investigatory agencies. But these people cannot generate sociological theory from their work. Only sociologists are trained to want it, to look for it and to generate it. (pp. 6-7)

I don't think I want - am not trained to want - sociological theory - nor philosophical, psychological, historical, anthropological theory. I want educational theory: as I understand it, theory of teaching and of the organization of teaching.

Some points are apparent:

1. A fact is accessible to understanding only by location as knowledge. What is educational (as opposed to historical or sociological) knowledge?
2. The data are often the same as the data of sociology or psychology, or of the other social sciences, but the theoretical concern is different because it is theory for the teacher as actor (not, however, a theory of action but of understanding).
3. Theory will be generated and verified in schools and classrooms. Whatever the support from outside, the teacher is in possession of the laboratory.
4. No theoretically disposed teacher can be regarded as a layman. Is there an analogy with medicine as distinct from anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology?

In the lucrative area of education the "contributory" disciplines (which have few outlets to applied fields) exercise a protection racket. You can see their theoretical muscles ripple beneath their jackets. They want educational data to make theories in which teachers are laymen.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The text highlights the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It describes the process of identifying key variables, designing surveys and questionnaires, and using statistical tools to interpret the results. The author stresses the importance of using reliable and valid data sources to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the application of the collected data to solve real-world problems. It provides examples of how the information gathered can be used to identify trends, make informed decisions, and develop effective strategies. The text also discusses the challenges and limitations of data analysis and offers suggestions for overcoming them.

4. The final part of the document concludes with a summary of the key points discussed throughout the text. It reiterates the importance of data-driven decision-making and the role of statistics in providing a clear and objective view of the data. The author expresses confidence that the information provided will be helpful and informative to the reader.

CULTURE AS A KEY CONCEPT IN THEORY OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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I want my theory to be grounded, but I already have a key concept grounded in earlier work*, which I shall want to consider as a reference point in the work I do this year. CULTURE offers a lot to educational theory because it defines relationship between ideational content and human interaction, and education may be seen as an attempt to interact in terms of a definition of content (curriculum).

Also CULTURE is a good hook with which to fish in a number of pools: symbolic interactionism, cultural anthropology, sociology of knowledge and cultural history.

Fifteen years ago when I tried to work out a symbolic interactionist theory of education based on culture, symbolic interactionism was in eclipse (except perhaps in Sweden) and culture consequently a concept too closely linked to the identity of numerable groups rather than seen as the medium of interaction. Now, both symbolic interactionism and culture are stronger and more adaptable.

Michael F.D. Young, Basil Bernstein and others have shown the possibility of a micro-analysis of the impact of power and control in the classroom on the content of the culture involved.

The Humanities Project, based on the culturally orientated symbolic interactionism of my old analysis, has shown points of strength and weakness in the theory.

Jean Rudduck, by picking up the conceptualization of culture used in Culture and Education, relating it to anthropologists' cultural diffusion studies and then using it to theorise dissemination, has helped me to see the culture of the teachers in more dynamic terms than the static style of reference group theory I previously used, and this makes way for a culture-based theory of innovation.

Rick Smith, my graduate student, has suggested to me the use of Gramsci's work on hegemony as a means of relating the power of the political system of the larger society to curriculum in school and to educational ideas; and I believe I have detected situations susceptible to this kind of analysis where the credibility of teachers is established vis-a-vis students by appeal to values lodged in the hegemony.

But this year I am concerned with research methods, not theory. I am here sketching the reference point, the kind of theory I want methods to make possible.

* Stenhouse, L.A.

'A Cultural Approach to the Sociology of the Curriculum'
in Pedagogisk Forskning (now Scandinavian Journal of
Educational Research) 1963, pp. 120-134

Stenhouse, L.A.

Culture and Education: London: Nelson's University Paperbacks,
1967

POLITICS AND EDUCATION

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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A risk-taking memo this because I'll not get the problem clear.

In some sense I'm a Marxist because I believe that the distribution of power and possession in society shapes cultural institutions. However, I believe that cultural institutions do not necessarily determine the use of culture by the individuals involved in them. Moreover, change in the distribution of power and possession, in cultural institutions and in culture originates in the accessibility of culture to individuals as a medium for creative thinking. Political paradigms are broken only as a result of cultural paradigms being broken. Progress is rooted in the power of meanings over political power.

Education is not an instrument of social policy because it cannot change society in the manner implied by that formulation. Yet in the broadest sense education - as access to culture - is the source of social change because it provides individuals with the meanings with which they can change society. The problem is that it also attempts to place rules on the use of meanings in order to maintain the system. It will always and of necessity do this; but each set of rules of system-maintenance has different implications for the scope of creative thought.

Perhaps, then, I'm interested in meanings as educational/cultural commodities.

I believe that educational politics are concerned with institutions rather than culture and perhaps inevitably so.

So I want to look at the shadow of politics on culture, not at politics directly. Meanings, not causes, of events.

I am interested in history which is mistakenly regarded as about causes but is actually about meanings, and less interested in behavioural sciences, which are about causes. Social investigation catches the blend of history and social science which attracts.

This is the basis of my interest in research rather than evaluation. All (cultural) meanings depend on generalization. Evaluation, which is funded to scrutinize or judge singularity, almost inevitably sees action as means (not meanings) or as brokerage of power. In the end the scrutiny of singularity can choose only between the authenticity of journalism and the truth of fiction. There can be no science (including history) of the singular.

That is not to say that research cannot be smuggled in baggage marked evaluation.

Nevertheless, in the last analysis I believe that the thrust of all evaluation which is not fiction is to increase the effectiveness of the control of the institution (political action) over the culture (meanings as a source of individual freedom to elude the hegemony).

TO ACT IN AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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To act in an historical context is one way to act intelligently.

To act in an historical context is to act with critical consciousness of history, not simply to be acted upon by a tradition. An understanding of historical context does not yield predictive generalisations; but it improves our estimate of situations and hence our judgement of possibilities, thereby helping us to escape being surprised - in the sense of ambushed - by the future.

Action can be in an historical context because the tradition within which it takes place has been researched and presented by historians. Most political action in our society has a historical context of this sort. It has precedents which can yield guidelines for action and precedents for style and feelings.

Action can also be in an historical context because it falls within a tradition recorded in the arts. Through the arts the dead address us and we can act within the context of their voices (understood or misunderstood). Most private spheres of action such as family life or courtship have an historical context of this sort accessible to the individual either directly or through contemporaries who mediate it.

In the broadest sense, historical context defines normality in evolving terms and helps it evolve. In its light we interpret our perceived world and review possibilities within it.

Education as policy and as legislative and administrative action has an historical context of the first kind. But the texture of the educational process - curriculum, teaching, learning, and the relationships formed in their context - has almost no formal history and, when compared with courtship or dying, for example, very little historical context provided by the arts. Nor are we now making and presenting a record which adequately portrays the present range of educational activity and defines the boundaries of the normal.

In this sense contemporary education is prehistoric. It has no history and is making next to none.

One result is that there is no reliable record to which to appeal. When people discuss educational process, they often appear to refer to personal experience or a construct inferred from normative writings ("the school in the sky").

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There is an important need for a common body of records as a referent of educational discussion and the foundation of a future history. (That which is the best source for the future historian is the best reference for the present actor.) We need narratives to alert us to our own story, and case studies to sensitize us to the nature of our case.

Such narratives and case studies are contemporary history. (But we know less about schools today than we know about parliament in the nineteenth century - or even perhaps the monasteries in the fourteenth century.)

EDUCATIONAL PORTRAYAL AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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The "portrayal" (Stake, 1972), which invites recognition and interpretative discussion, contrasts with an analytic style which abstracts variables beyond recognition in order to manipulate them to produce general predictions which elude judgement in the light of experience. But portrayal is not best defined by contrast with the paradigms of behavioural science, but in terms of its affiliations.

Its affiliates are history, social investigation and that social science which deals in (and hence attempts to conserve in its research processes) non-scientific meanings.

But as well as sibling affiliates, portrayal has ancestors or antecedents which take us back to Aristotle's portrayal of the educational practices of the Greek city states. There are the accounts of schools by travelling educators such as Horace Mann, by inspectors and, at a less intimate level, by policy-orientated investigators such as Michael Sadler. These are the foundations of portrayal in comparative education, now a neglected area within that field.

Another antecedent line portrays teaching and schools as recognizable fictions: in Dickens and Washington Irving, where caricature highlights certain features; in Emile or How Gertrude Teaches her Children, where the logic of a model to be presented overrides verisimilitude or in Caldwell Cook's Play Way, where the assumption is that an account smoothed towards the teacher's aspirant vision and ignoring the blemishes of the instance is the best guiding light for practice.

In recent years these accounts of classrooms which wittingly falsify the portrayal the better to instruct the teacher have been recalled to empirical authenticity by critics who suggest that authentic portrayal should be the foundation for a discussion of prospects. Interaction analysis (Bales, Flanders, and pioneered in this country by Reg Revans) led the way and exposed the gap between participant perception and observer record and hence between intention and performance. The critical - as opposed to the quantitative - analysis of classroom process became more possible with the advent of tape-recording (and other forms of audio-visual record) and the pioneer work in this country was done by Ronnie Morris. From this there is a direct line to the classroom study in the Humanities Project and hence in Ford T and the Race Project. The Hamilton/Delamont tradition perhaps has Transatlantic antecedents (? L. Smith and Geoffrey, or a common root with them in the Chicago school of Park and others). And B.O. Smith and Meux also influenced HCP and its descendents.

Interestingly - and American informants tell me this is not true over there - the greatest volume of educational research in Britain is probably historical and within that the largest part is case study - the study of individual schools. It may be that one way into the problem of case study is to ask: what is it that we want of case studies that these historical case studies do not offer?

However, I've said enough to make my point. 'Portrayal' can perhaps be more profitably thought of as claiming this range of antecedents and affiliates than as rejecting the antecedents and affiliates of the behavioural sciences. Stake has caught in a well-chosen word the point of intersection of several traditions in the study of and in the discussion of education.

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VON RANKE AND KEMMIS AT STAKE: TALES AND SURVEYS

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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Kemmis's ironical "telling it like it is" echoing Von Ranke's "to show how it really was" (wie es eigentlich gewesen) reminds us that we are in Clio's embrace. I don't think she can, in fact, tell it like it is or show us how it was, but this does not mean that she will invent it. On the contrary her character is to aim at authenticated truth rather than invented truth (as do the other muses). This is her arrest of experience (Oakshott). She seeks a more limited but securer truth than the fine arts, a truth public enough to serve as a point of appeal in discussion of practice. She does not imitate life but re-enacts it (Collingwood). Where the arts offer bold conjecture her parsimony of conjecture leaves that more room to set speculation to work at the boundaries of authentication. Art invites us through experience to quintessence; history draws us through experience to the discussion of possibility. Art is creative convergence: la scene juste; history is creative divergence: a glass to show us range.

I put it another way if I say that history is the most representational of arts as music is the least. Schopenhauer thought all arts aspired towards the condition of music. Not true. They aspire to truth through representation or truth through formal essence. These are two opposed and irreconcilable extremes. Historians and musicians are the extremists.

Within history there are two major traditions, the narrative and the survey, each a way of patterning data. The narrative tends to describe the unique and imply the general: the survey generalizes and implies the unique when it does not describe it to illustrate the general. The first seeks to authenticate the unique at the expense of leaving the general unauthenticated: the second to authenticate the general at the expense of unauthenticated implications of the unique. The first documents one possibility, the second a range of possibilities. The first describes action, the second the context or conditions of action.

INTERACTIONS: SURPRISES: PORTRAYALS

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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Theoretical grasp of (ie. understanding of) a situation may be judged by whether one feels surprised. The less surprise, the completer the theory.

Portrayal research is as yet relatively innocent of public substantive theory. This memo highlights the problem of the inevitable use of private theory.

When I am sent a catalogue by my tailor (!) it offers town suits, business suits, country suits, sporting suits, suits for the formal occasion and so forth. When I buy clothes, I buy clothes to teach in or to go on holiday in or to wear at interviews. The convention is that there is a small range of permissible choice within which to exercise a personal preference: basically clothes (for men) define situations, not people.

However, there have always been some people who choose clothes to define or express themselves: G.B. Shaw's knickerbockers, Lloyd George's Ulster. They are called "eccentrics". They refuse to cue their clothes to situations. They only do it to annoy, because they know it teases.

Nevertheless, Jeeves can always select Bertie Wooster's suit when he knows where he is going, and most politicians dress to address their audiences. So one might expect a curriculum project to choose its dress and its speeches to suit occasions, and even find it noteworthy enough to require a theory if they did not do this.

Barry and Rob produce theory to explain people behaving normally in such a situation (Geography for the Young School Leaver and audience response). Could it be that they are surprised? Why?

There is a new dress convention within which men dress to express themselves without regarding themselves as eccentrics. Both Barry and Rob belong to that convention.

(Now, I've got a theory about them, and the next time someone asks me what they are trying to say about their attitude to an occasion by their dress, I'll say they are saying something about themselves.)

If I start out by being incredulous that GYSL behaviour is worth a theory, I end up being pleased to find a theory to explain SAFARI behaviour. But no doubt they are incredulous that they need to be explained.

Which is the better position: eliminate both theories because they are unnecessary elaborations of the trite and expected; or accept them both as useful. Obviously, the latter, I think.

A portrayal team should exhibit a range of disparate surprises.

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THOMAS JEFFERSON AND LAWRENCE STENHOUSE

From: Lawrence Stenhouse, CARE

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"Dumas Malone, for instance, learned from long familiarity with Jefferson's papers that his subject's vocabulary grew more 'radical' in writing to younger men. This was a sign not so much of Jefferson's eagerness for a new revolution as of his desire to awaken the coming generation to its responsibility for progress."

Barzun, Jacques and Graff, Henry F.

The Modern Researcher, New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1962.

Lawrence Stenhouse, for instance, learned from long familiarity with Lawrence Stenhouse that his subject's vocabulary grew more 'radical' in talking to younger men. At first he thought he might be trying to preserve his capacity to show promise or even avoid the accusation that he was drifting in middle age to the right. This was an uncomfortable thought which was dispelled with relief when he realised that he simply shared with Jefferson a "desire to awaken the coming generation to its responsibility for progress".

Still, I wish I knew how Barzun and Graff knew that Jefferson was like me and not like how I feared I might be.

