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Citation:

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Proposal Information of Contribution 1488

The Role of Situated Talk in Developing Doctoral Students' Researcher Identities

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The doctoral journey involves developing knowledge and research skills, but equally, and crucially, it also involves identity formation and transition (Austin & McDaniels, 2006, Green, 2005; Jazvac- Martek, 2009). Recognising both the difficulty of developing new identities (Leshem, 2020, Jazvac- Martek, 2009; Hall & Burns, 2009) and high attrition and lengthy time to completion rates in doctoral education (Gardner 2007; Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008), scholars highlight the importance of helping doctoral students develop a researcher identity. However, little is known about how to do this (Choi et al, 2021). In this presentation we examine the development of researcher identities within a professional doctorate in education (EdD). Using a linguistic ethnography approach, we analyse a tutorial sequence and show how EdD students claim, ascribe, build and verify their own and each other's researcher identities during tutorial talk.

Identities are performed as students narrate researcher actions. Identities are co-constructed and verified by students who tell similar stories, accepting and building on previous students' talk. Identities are also verified by tutors who explicitly recognise the importance and validity of students' actions and describe experiencing similar, often difficult, processes themselves. This transparency and vulnerability helps students reflect on their own identity transitions, in particular making the idea of being of a doctoral researcher seem achievable, echoing findings from Lassig et al. (2013) and Rockinson-Szapkiw et al. (2017). Tutorial talk facilitates knowledge and understanding. As participants build on each other's contributions and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and understanding, students gain a deeper understanding of the norms and practices of being a researcher. This knowledge and understanding is part of the process of researcher identity development. Other people are shown to be important in the development of researcher identities. Tutors and supervisors provide reassurance and support. Fellow students and tutors play an important role in verifying claimed identities during tutorial talk. Tutorial talk also builds a sense of community. Through sharing experiences, students and tutors learn from each other but this sharing also helps them achieve a greater sense of belonging and develop a researcher identity.

In the presentation we make recommendations for both practice and research. We detail how questions and tutors sharing their own struggles and vulnerabilities can facilitate doctoral researcher development. We propose using data extracts for supervisor training to raise awareness, stimulate discussion and enhance practice. We make a methodological plea that the field of education follow the lead of researchers in business and medicine and expand the methods used to investigate teacher, student and researcher identities to include analysis of the ways in which identities are negotiated during situated 'real life' interaction (i.e. interaction not elicited during research interviews). We give recommendations for future research based on situated study-based talk and on longitudinal research looking at how identities develop at different stages of an EdD programme.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used
This study took a linguistic ethnography (LE) approach to data collection and analysis. LE explores the links between people, encounters and institutions (Rampton, 2007) by giving attention to 'lived experience wrapping around language, and vice versa' (Rock, 2015: 149). This presentation reports on data collected from tutorials on the first two modules of the EdD, one facilitating critical reflection on the researchers' positionality and engagement with a critical analysis of education policy relevant to their study and the second, a critical literature review. Six tutorials were audio recorded during the first two modules. Interviews (audio recorded and one-to-one) were then carried out with nine students a few weeks after the last tutorial recording to seek students' opinions of the tutorials.
Data analysis started with an iterative process of listening to audio recordings, checking transcripts, and making 'noticing' notes of points of interest. We then carried out separate initial thematic coding on a subset of the data (one tutorial and two interviews) using Nvivo. We compared and discussed codes and established an initial coding framework with the understanding that this could be changed or expanded as analysis progressed. Following this, we carried out a second round of coding of the full data set together with regular research meetings where we explained and justified decisions, working towards clarification and a degree of shared meaning. A code book recorded those decisions and codes were established. Next, we conducted a linguistic analysis of tutorial talk. We identified sequences which showed instances of identity negotiation and analysed these by looking at talk across several turns, paying particular attention to how tutorial participants claimed and constituted identities and how others verified or challenged these identities and built their own identities. Finally, we cross referenced codes from these tutorial sequences with codes from interviews. In the presentation we show the final two stages of this by analysing one tutorial sequence. We show identity construction as it happens, turn by turn. The analysis illuminates how, through talk, tutorial participants perform, co-construct and verify researcher identities.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings
This presentation shows how tutorials enable the development of researcher identities for doctoral students through study-based talk. Such facilitated situated talk also acts as a rehearsal space, where beginning researchers claim new identities. Affective dimensions of researcher development are foregrounded, providing data to inform supervisors reflection on practice. Methodologically, this study expands the repertoire of approaches often adopted in education, using linguistic ethnography to study 'real life' interaction.

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