JULIAN SEFTON-GREEN

13. CAN STUDYING LEARNING ACROSS CONTEXTS CHANGE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH OR WILL IT LEAD TO THE PEDAGOCIZATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE?

At first glance there appears to be something both backward and forward looking in this collection. The ambition to study learning across contexts harks back to the early progressive ambitions of sociocultural theory to conceptualise learning in ways that emphasise its rootedness in cultural practices rather than privileging forms of education shaped and privileged by academic schooling in contemporary societies (Scribner & Cole, 1973). At the same time the collection is highly contemporary, looking forward to an interconnected social life where school is only one site for learning amongst many and where the value of learning has permeated many different social contexts (Edwards, Biesta, & Thorpe, 2009). The fact that the authors of this collection, and the project, which initiated it, are Scandinavian is no accident and bears heavily on this dual perspective. Whereas lifelong learning has attracted criticism for its colonisation of everyday life and the imposition of responsibility for continuing education onto the individual (Field, 2006), Scandinavian societies, as represented by the analyses in this collection, still hold onto state supported educational initiatives as a guarantee of social mobility and persist with an enlightened, non-surveillant conception of the distribution of learning experiences across social life in general – significantly motivated by humanistic beliefs in the growth of the person (*bildung)* (Biesta, 2011).

There is also an immediate and current policy focus to this work in that as it directs the readers' attention across a wide range of contexts, this collection is also making the argument that it is premature to limit any understanding of education to schools-based outcomes: and this is not a popular position in the UK or the United States at this time. This is mainly a question of understanding learning more broadly than as simply measured by standardised testing and again the collection's Nordic origin reveals a broader concern with personal well-being and a wider understanding of the benefits and purposes of education in general (Sahlgren, 2015). Although a number of the essays here are set within school and concerned with progress within formal academic disciplines, nevertheless the thrust of the discussion has been to open up ways that learners travel across contexts and how contemporary epistemology is best understood in terms of distributed and plural knowledge(s) rather than a set of easily digestible facts.

The introduction to this volume drew attention to the potentially transformative role of digital technology in both disrupting existing contexts for learning and creating and linking to other and new ones; yet it remains a paradox that despite such innovations and such faith in them, the main response of public education systems around the world has been to retrench and concentrate on standardised and tested outcomes in the face of ever-increasing possibilities for alternative ways of arranging and measuring learning. In general, it should also be added, the authors in this collection have actually drawn on the stimulus any attention to the digital has created, as a way of looking at anew at social relationships as they are constituted within and across formal and informal learning environments. It is not so much that the digital has opened up startling new learning contexts more that it has focused attention on the challenges of building learner agency and the way that the credentialing power of authority in schools has been both unsettled and reasserted.

For the rest of this essay I too want to draw from the boundary of the new and the old, the established and the innovative, the backward and forward in order to explore two challenges thrown up by this collection. The first of these derives from the fact that digital research methods now mean that it is possible to find out much more about the ways that learners themselves move between/across/within learning contexts and that the long-standing interest in learning across contexts can be investigated by following or tracing learners themselves. Secondly I want to take up the challenge posed in the introduction that there has been an intensification of interest in learning to the point where it is now plausible to talk about a pedagocization of everyday life – a term or concept which carries with it, fraught values and polarized debate.

FROM LEARNING ACROSS CONTEXTS TO FOLLOWING LEARNERS ACROSS CONTEXTS

The scholars in this collection are particularly interested in the question of how knowledge and learning *travel* across different kinds of contexts and are then applied and reapplied with and to different forms of understanding. We tend to use terms like 'travel', 'transfer' and crossover' to describe the processual (Drotner, 2013) nature of identifying and theorizing phenomena for analysis but this language, and these metaphors actually frame some limits when applied to 'following' learning across contexts.

In trying to open up the vexed challenge of theorizing learning transfer to make sense of how we learn across social contexts, and what learning might mean in more informal domestic circumstances, Reed Stevens and his colleagues offered a series of detailed studies of gaming in the home (Stevens, Satwicz, & McCarthy, 2008). They argue that we need to look at the 'dispositions and purposes' that people bring with them to experiences and then 'what people *make* of experiences in other times and places in their lives' (p. 63/64 original italics). Learning, they suggest is the processes of interpretation as people reach back and forth across experiences (and the meanings that have been attributed to them). Rather than focusing on the learning

experience in isolation we need to pay attention to how learners conceptualize, contextualize and reflect on experiences and what resources they use and draw on to do this. They suggest that only by developing methods that allow us to study people across and within a range of settings can we see how people actively juxtapose, reject, select, contrast or build on experiences. This suggests the need for a research focus that captures both an intra-personal historical dimension, as individuals frame their experiences over time, as well as a way of describing the types of understanding – the language and values that circulate within it (for an example, see Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016).

Scholars who have taken up this challenge of following or tracking young people across settings and over time have not always made the idea of learning an explicit focus of their work. Some of the most absorbing and narrative rich multisite ethnographies are place-centered, but as in the tradtion of Paul Willis' work (Willis, 1978) concerned with political questions of social reproduction and the relationship between the formation of subjectivity and class identity. Lois Weiss similarly followed cohorts of young people into adulthood, parenthood and work (or un and under employment), (Weis, 2004). These studies implicitly develop theories of learning as part of the way they account for how the young people in these studies change over time. Additionally, and possibly as a consequence of this attention to people over time, these studies are explicitly concerned with the role of formal schooling from both institutional and experiential perspectives. The authors balance a focus on critical moments with an attention to the effects of slow change where the attritional nature of difficult living conditions inevitably frame and reframe aspirations as the characters in these books build lives for themselves. Inevitably this means defining what constitutes learning – what might be the phenomenon we can observe and study – as complicated and politically contentious. At an in-principle and theoretical level who defines what learning is, and when it is learning, is also part of this problem (Green & Luke, 2006; Ladwig, 2010).

Here also the concept of a transition (another vector–based term) as both describing a movement across institutional boundaries and an intra-personal process of change and growth has been important: (see Ecclestone, Biesta, & Hughes, 2009). The longitudinal studies in this tradition do follow individuals in considerable detail across important institutional boundaries: from home to independent living; across educational institutions such as school or university; into relationships and taking on of family responsibilities and so forth. The processes of understanding and conceptualising transition, of mediating and coping with significant change at the same time as observing continuities in the self and in the everyday are well captured and theorised in these longitudinal studies and yet rarely enter into the micro- and temporally focused studies of children and young people's learning across contexts.

Similarly, the attention in this literature and that of the wider lifelong learning tradition (see for example, Edwards, 1997), on the place and meaning of schooling within the subject's 'life' and therefore how conceptions of schooling determine understanding about the meaning and purpose of learning, is also an influence in

this field. Different conceptualisations of the instrumental or the intrinsic value of learning, the value of rote learning or of exposure to new experiences and how such ideas relate to different cultural expectations helps us disentangle generational debates within the family about the purposes of learning. Making sense of learning over time thus almost always depends on how we interpret the reflexivity of those that we study. Reflecting on transitions, situating the meaning of choosing a particular subject of this or that high school in relationship to an understanding of the family narratives about learning – even talking about learning in non-academic domains – all rest on how subjects make sense of and interpret these experiences. Rachel Thomson draws attention to how we can make sense of 'the meaning of reflective performances in relation to particular social fields' (Thomson, 2009: 172). She suggests that studying 'learning lives' (Erstad & Sefton-Green, 2013b), involves the relationship between identity, subjectivity and possibility; that is, the kind of person young people want to be, their sense of themselves and the social possibilities open to them (172). Her work and that of others (for example, McLeod & Thomson, 2009), alerts us to the need for a wide range of processual methodologies drawing on memory work, oral history, generation and revisiting as well as exploring time and emotions in research practice.

All of these kinds of longitudinal study are of course the traditional way to understand change over time but, as the authors collected here have argued, sociocultural attention to the interplay of identity, context and forms of knowledge also makes visible the reinforcement and disconnection we all of us build for ourselves as we construct theories of learning to make sense of the social practices we encounter in our everyday lives. Traces of these kinds of interactions are now more permanent and visible as they frequently occur in digital media and one key challenge for research in the future that begins from these questions will be the impact of big data and the host of micro-transactions that we can now collect around social interactions-in context. The burgeoning field of learning analytics (see: http://learning-analytics.info) suggests that intra-institutional learning across contexts can now be gathered at scale. The kinds of scholarship recounted above is labour intensive and frequently centred around individuals or small groups in order to build up the weight of historical evidence, yet it may soon be possible to begin applying the same kind of perspective using forms of digital ethnography.

Whilst learning analytics so far is more concerned with understanding the meaning of measurable and observable outcomes it will be interesting to see whether the kind of tracking across institutional spaces and within social networks (see for example, Silverman, 2015, or Schneier, 2015) can be harnessed to complement the intellectual tradition we have grown up with in order to challenge what it might mean to study learning across contexts. This will also mean a shift from individual or small case studies which of course populate this book and which we know have little status in larger policy debates about education. Given much study of learning across contexts is at this micro-interactional level, these new opportunities to broaden out a hitherto limited range of methods to capture what are extremely difficult and complex social

phenomena many offer the sociocultural tradition a much more dynamic future at the centre of debates about education.

OR TOWARDS THE PEDAGOCIZATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

However, in a post-Snowdon age it is impossible to see the application of big data and the capacity to trace social interactions across contexts even the tradition of longitudinal ethnography entirely innocently (Schneier, 2015). Whilst the section above argued that studying learning across contexts may help disrupt the emphasis on standardised and measurable outcomes and thus frame study of what it might mean to be educated (Levinson, Foley, & Holland, 1996) within the sociocultural tradition – a move I have emphasised several times, with significant political implications and one which sits far more easily within the more liberal social democratic societies of the Nordic countries – it is not without its consequences. Key to this more dystopian interpretation of the interest in studying learning across contexts is the fact that whereas education used to be understood as a public good, now the burden to be involved in leaning can be seen as part of the management of risk in an individualized society (Chisholm, 2008).

From this perspective an interest in learning across contexts can be seen as a larger project to pedagocize everyday life where in a remorseless, exhaustive, 24:7 regime, all forms of social and leisure activity can be 'curricularised' (Buckingham & Scanlon, 2000, and see also Kenway & Bullen, 2001) and turned to educational ends. In particular, the learning lives of parents and children outside of school are subject to increasing scrutiny and attention (Nixon, 2013), and there is intense pressure on family life to ensure that growing up is spent purposefully with a particular emphasis on engaging in educationally 'worthwhile' activities (Lareau, 2003). Many commentators explain this intensity of attention to what was hitherto the more private and un-circumscribed leisure time of young people as a consequence of increasing competition in an accelerating global war for talent in the current economic climate (Brown, Lauder, & Ashton, 2011; Ito et al., 2013; Mason, 2015). These scholars suggest that an increased anxiety about employment, in the context of a globalised economy, has led to an increase in private, family-centred learning driven by the commercial interests of the 'edutainment' leisure industry (see for example, Buckingham & Scanlon, 2002; Ball, 2008).

Key ideas in this regime are the ideas of 'informal' and 'non-formal' learning, the utilisation of after-school and community activities and, intermixed with all of these, the role of digital technologies as both medium and resource for this expansion (Sefton-Green, 2004; Sefton-Green, 2013; Erstad & Sefton-Green, 2013a). Of course, the idea that we are living through a period of intensification, that time previously given over to 'childhood' or the leisure activities of youth are now being monitored and controlled in different ways, begs three important questions. The first of these is historical. Whilst it makes for a compelling critique that growing up in the digital age means that private and leisure time activities are now being

colonised by the pressures of neoliberal forms of subjectivity, the empirical evidence about the nature of childhood and leisure or changing attitudes to learning is more difficult to find and to interpret (Buckingham, 2000). The second challenge is more conceptual. Research into forms of learning in non-school contexts has frequently been provocative – especially the attempts to recuperate what are commonly seen as 'non-educational' pursuits like computer games (Gee, 2004) – and have helped to develop theories of learning beyond the school. These theories characterise an ever-increasing range of social engagement as learning and as pedagogy, thus subsuming our interest in learning across contexts into a more surveillant gaze (Rose, 1999).

Thirdly, schooling is frequently given prominence as a kind of meta-level organisational metaphor for all kinds of teaching and learning. The question then becomes whether pedagogy is a kind of master metaphor extrapolated from the wider pedagogicization of modern social life and has traction because of its place within that paradigm or whether at a technical level it offers us something new as a way of explaining how we become who we are. Pedagogy can be used as a theory to explain older and other kinds of force as an example of power (as in Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) formulation of 'symbolic violence for example). It seems a particularly effective way of theorising structuration in that it appears to offer a way of making sense of agency (the activity, the motivation and drive of the learner) as well as the determining influence of structure (the 'curriculum' however, or wherever that is defined, (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 2004)).

The spread of schooled forms of discipline into wider social life is thus described as the pedagogicization of everyday life, but strangely enough this is not a widely explored or theorised concept. This may be because the word itself, 'pedagogicization', is so terrible. At a macro level, the idea has been useful and is often glibly used, especially in the Foucauldian tradition, and it also seems to be widely used in the Germanic intellectual traditions to explain structuring processes (Depaepe, Herman, Surmont, Gorp, & Simon, 2008). The sociologist Basil Bernstein used the term to describe how the discourses and practices of schooling 're-contextualise' knowledge and understanding in an excluding and exclusive fashion (Bernstein, 1990). His work describes a conflict between casual everyday knowledge and disciplined controlled and arcane expressions of 'formal knowledge'. He emphasised how school 're-contextualises' knowledge seeking to impose disciplinarity and exclusivity on new and emerging domains especially with regard to the use of specialised academic language (Moore, Arnot, Beck, & Daniels, 2009; Tyler, 2004). His later work argued we are living through a wider pedagogicization of society involving the spread of school-like forms of organisation and subjectivity beyond the boundaries of traditional learning institutions, describing this as the 'totally pedagogicized society' (Bernstein, 2001), situating it, in line with the arguments in the introduction to this volume, as part of the reclassification of traditional knowledge boundaries coming about as a result of the knowledge society and the economic imperatives to engage in lifelong learning. From this point of view, learning across contexts speeds up and connects previously disparate educational experiences incorporating them in the

pedagogic gaze. One implication then is that researchers such as those collected in this volume who clearly start with an enlightened and idealistic interest in making sense of learner agency and in empowering learners to reflect on and make sense of a wide range of experiences, are actually playing their part in the expansion and incorporation of the pedagogicized society.

CONCLUSION: KNOWING TOO MUCH, NOT KNOWING ENOUGH OR NOT-KNOWING

Studying learning across contexts is an ambitious intellectual challenge. It requires significant resources for research, especially time and complex multiple methods. It is difficult to do at scale yet crucial not only to understand the different kinds of learning that are embedded in diverse forms of social participation but in raising important challenges to the dominance of a simplified uniform notion of schooling enjoying so much political popularity across the societies of the global North. This volume contributes to that debate even if one of the messages from this collection is that we don't know enough about how to study learners learning across contexts or indeed how to study their learning within more than one context at a time.

However, the possibly strange pedagocized, surveillant world where every trace we make can lead to data maps and large-scale patterns of social behaviour and interaction (Lima, 2011), and where lifelong learning becomes a burden for the individual negotiating their way through late modernity might also mean that our interest in learning across contexts paradoxically can lead to the diminution of the kind of educational values we set out to espouse. Here knowing too much maybe a cause for introspection and a reflection on the politics of research.

It seems impossible for any intellectual agenda not to be able to draw on the new social sciences that shed insight onto connections, disconnections, networks and social relationships. This may be a project whose consequences we cannot yet foresee but the careful and conscientious work of the young scholars collected in this volume suggest that the ambition to truly know what it might mean to learn across contexts is going to engage with these assumptions and these desires head-on.

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Julian Sefton-Green

Department of Media & Communication, London School of Economics, and Department of Education, University of Oslo