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Personal epiphanies and seeing the world afresh; developing a qualitative methodology to explore higher education teacher pedagogic practices in a UK landbased college

Presentation outline

- Why study HE in FE landbased teacher pedagogic practice?
- Positioning myself as a researcher – challenges and turns
- Practice Theory – a brief sketch
- Practice Architectures – a brief sketch
- Grounded Theory – a brief sketch
- Mixing and melding; a methodological framework
- Benefits of using a practice lens to explore HE in FE landbased teacher pedagogic practice
- Q&A



Research question

When teaching HE, what do these HE in FE teachers do, how do they do it, and why?

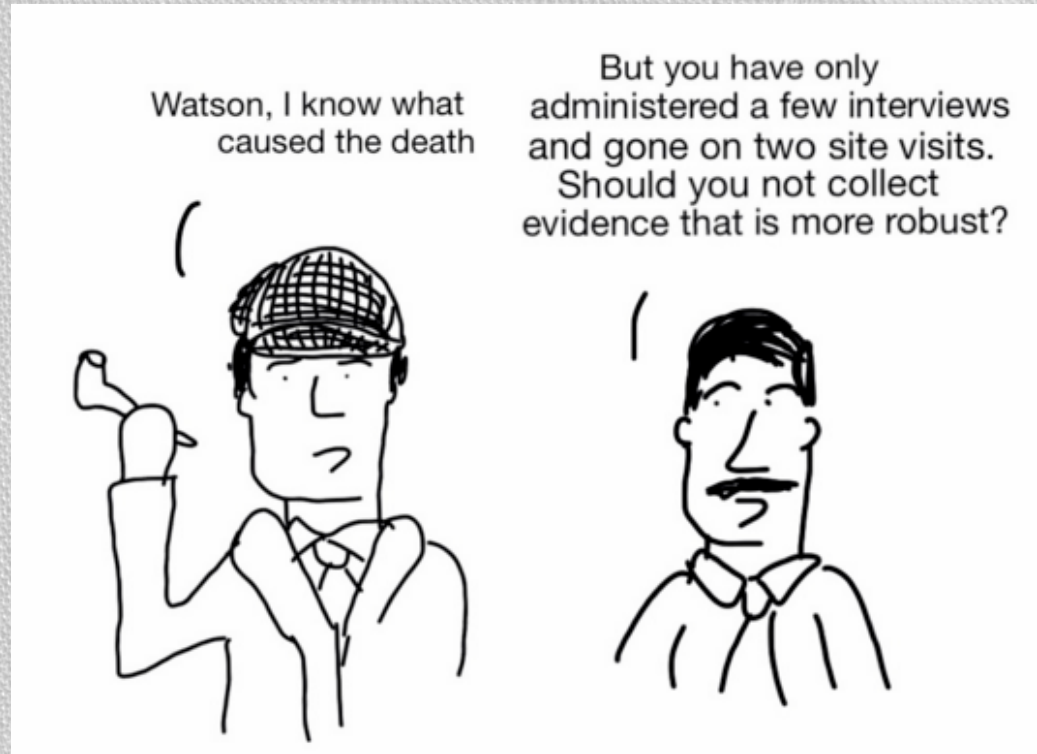
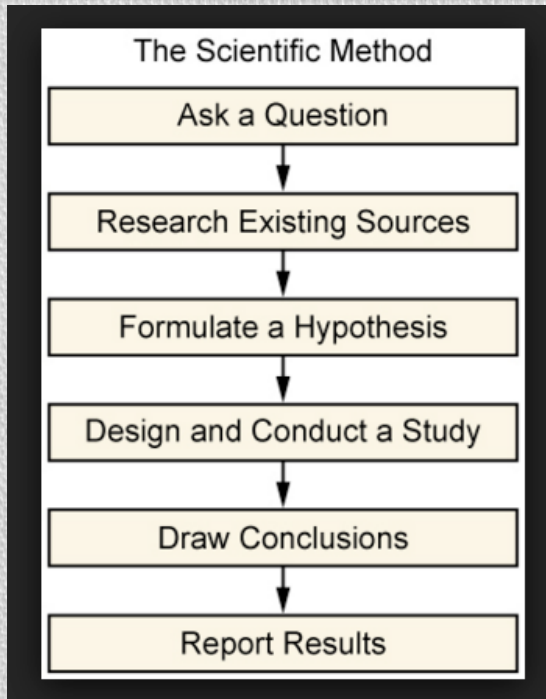
Why study HE in FE landbased teacher pedagogic practice?

- Personal interest and following a hunch
- HE and FE teaching remit – switching levels
- Heavy teaching load
- Generalist FE teaching model – ‘Jack of all trades’
- FE ‘culture’ – managerialist? Ofsted?
- Dominated by under 18s (increasingly 14-16 yr olds)
- Often limited dedicated HE resources/facilities

Why study HE in FE landbased teacher pedagogic practice?

- Multiple experiences of landbased HE in FE
- Vocational/skills emphasis (RCVS, BHS)
- Atypical – most landbased HE is HE in FE (Rapley, 2014)
- Under-researched
- Under-theorised
- Add to the HE in FE literature corpus

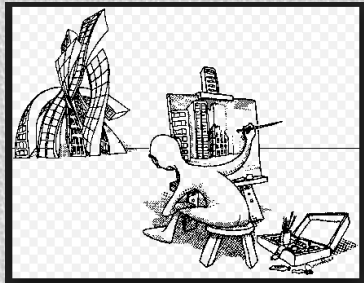
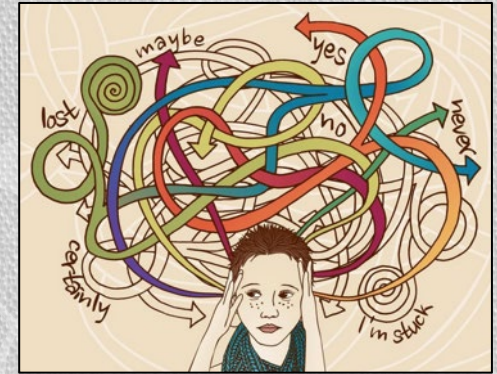
Positioning myself as a researcher – challenges and turns



Positioning myself as a researcher – challenges and turns

BUT

WHY?



I wanted to go beyond **what**... I wanted to understand **why** they did what they did

N=?



Things jist ain't been the same 'round here since that re-search dude did those inter-views.

I want to know the essence of horseness.

What does it mean to be a chicken?

I must find my inner porcinicity.



Practice Theory – a brief sketch

- Developing a sensitivity to practice... my hunch about HE in FE
- “Best practice”, “Good practice”, “Practice based”...
- Not simple mechanics... tacit, meaning, intention
- Anti-dualist (avoids separating individuals and context)
- Socio-material/material and non-human objects
- Particularity, rather than generality (situated)
- Heritaged conditions...practice traditions

Practice Theory – Practice Architectures (PA) (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008)

- Developed from Site Ontology (Schatzki, 2002) – PA has education research focus
- Societist not individualist perspective on practices
- practice is formed in a project ... project aim characterised by practitioners' *sayings* (forms of understanding), *doings* (modes of action) and *relatings* (ways in which people relate to one another and the world)
- practices are made possible by particular PAs that enable and constrain the way the conduct of a practice unfolds in a particular site
- practices are shaped by arrangements *outside* the practitioners' in cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements

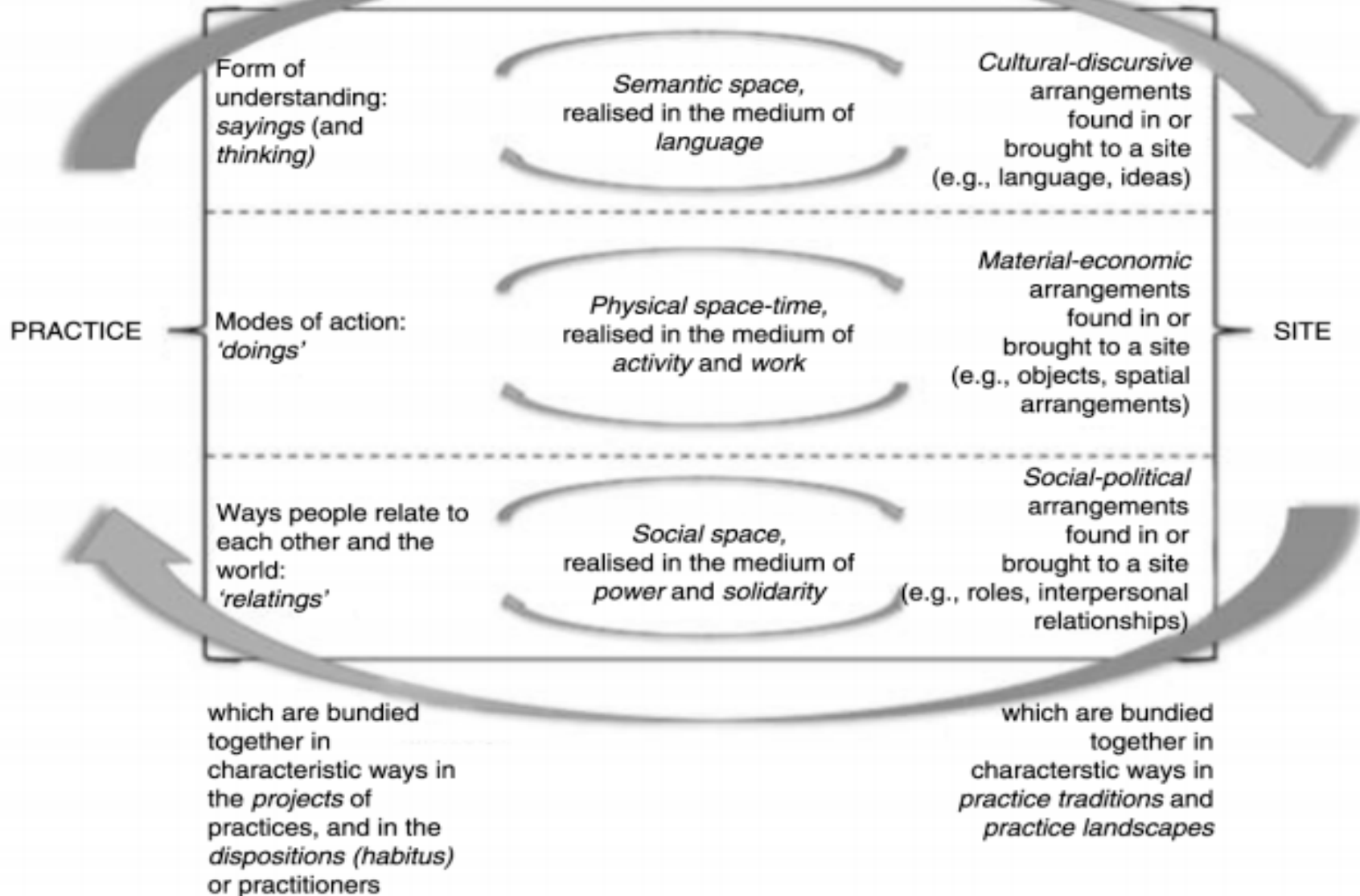
On the side of
the individual,
the person

Practices are
interactionally secured
in:

In *intersubjective space*
and the *medium of*

Practice architectures
are the *arrangements*
and *set-ups* that
enable and constrain
practices:

On the side of
the social,
the world we
share



Practice Theory – Practice Architectures (PA) (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008)

- “constructing themselves in the terms made available to them by the practice architectures they inhabit... teachers are made the educators and teachers they come to be by complying with and also by resisting the particular practice architectures in which they live and work” (Kemmis, 2008, p.21)
- “what particular people do, in a particular place and time, and it contributes to the formulation of their identities as people of a particular kind, and their agency and sense of agency” (Kemmis, 2009, p. 23).
- Used a PA lens to inspire an interpretivist methodological approach to consider both people, the place and things and how they can shape HE teacher pedagogic practice

But I also wanted a methodological approach to build theory in this under-theorised and under-researched area... cue Grounded Theory



Grounded Theory – a brief sketch

- Glaser & Strauss (1967), Strauss & Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006)
- Generate mid-range substantive theory
- Inductive not hypothetico-deductive
- Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz) (CGT) interpretivist, co-constructed, qualitative
- Rendering of experiences, not objective reporting of reality
- Constant comparison, theoretical sampling, memoing
- Use own experiences and theoretical sensitivity to inform research (not *tabula rasa*)
- CGT fits with PA – people, action, specific places, practice as socially constructed... considers why and how questions

Mixing and melding; a methodological framework

- Alert to PA and CGT – language, action, sayings, doings, relatings, enabling and constraining factors
- People and the place as a Site Ontology (Schatzki, 2002)
- Alert to socio-material aspects (equipment, set ups, posters, documents etc.) and prefigurement potential
- Not going in with preconceived categories or hypotheses to test, just ‘points of departure’ (Charmaz, 2006)

Mixing and melding; a methodological framework

- Immersive period of fieldwork... 'hanging out' (Bernard, 1994)
- Narrative Walks (Jerneck and Olsson, 2013) (pre interview)
- Intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2006) (pre and post observation)
- Classroom observations – x3 FE and x3 HE
- Theoretically sampling to follow new leads with teachers plus other staff and students
- Construct CGT categories in accordance with grounded data derived from the site

Benefits of using a PA practice lens and CGT to explore HE in FE landbased teacher pedagogic practice

- Holistic view of practice, no people and place binary
- Holistic view of practice, considers non-human things and artefacts
- Multi-layered, co-constructed, participant voices
- Can help answer “why” questions
- Rich data, deeper exploration
- Greater interpretive understanding of the phenomenon
- Construct new theoretical understandings
- Generalisability potential for HE in FE more broadly

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THANK YOU
for listening!



ANY
QUESTIONS
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