

A world map in a light blue color scheme, showing continents and oceans. The map is overlaid with vibrant, wavy borders in shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The text is centered over the map.

RESEARCHING WITH MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES : FOCUS ON CHILDREN

Sinead Matson

WHAT ARE CHILDREN?

- New-born
- Baby
- Toddler
- Wobbler
- Pre-Schooler
- Young Child
- School-Aged Child
- Tweenie
- Teenager
- Young Adult
- First born
- Middle child
- Youngest
- Only child
- Carer
- Able-bodied
- Disabled
- Head of Household
- Worker
- Eldest Girl
- Eldest Boy
- Literate
- Illiterate
- Migrant
- Refugee
- Marginalised
- Privileged
- Under-privileged
- Untouchable
- Unreachable
- Living in poverty
- Living in wealth
- Adopted
- Fostered
- Living in Care
- Living on the Streets

CHILDREN ARE NOT A HOMOGENOUS GROUP AND AS A RESULT ARE OFTEN ALREADY MARGINALISED.

- The list of categories on the previous slide is by no means exhaustive, in fact it's the tip of the iceberg!
- The categories are fluid and interchangeable.
- Children can occupy several categories at the same time and can change categories as they grow making their identity during their life time even more fluid.
- Categorising children is about as easy as nailing smoke to a wall.
- Researching with marginalised children can be successful with an arts-based, participatory methodology combined with ethnographic methods.
- In order to research a group of children you must observe them in their world and get to know them by observing, note-taking and interacting with them at their level before approaching with your agenda.

SNOWBALL FIGHT

- The first task we did when trying to categorise children is called a snowball fight.
- It's a participatory model that works well with large groups of literate children or young adults.
- It give children or young adults the space to anonymously ask a question or state an opinion.
- It is relatively safe and anonymous (make sure all paper / pens are the same colour).
- It can lead to group discussions rather than the traditional focus groups which can be less safe and loaded.

WHY USE ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS?

- Children do not stand alone – participatory and art-based methods are not enough to give you the full picture of the child's life.
- They are the child's perception and your interpretation.
- To get a fuller picture you must involve parents, siblings, families, neighbours, schools, teachers, communities.
- You must look at economic status, culture, value systems, religion, gender, birth order, education system, local and national political situations, local and national economic situations, policies etc.
- Tapestry – each one is a thread in the tapestry of the child's life and without making sense of them all you cannot see the child's life in full.

RESEARCHER'S PHOTO-OBSERVATIONS

- Part of Ethnographic methodology.
- Visual prompts when away from the field.
- Quick, easy way to capture data.
- Verified my field-notes, what children said or what I understood from their photos, conversations or drawings.
- Can be used with children, teachers, parents etc.
- Can be coded and themed in analysis.
- Ethical implications – especially in terms of publication and data protection

PHOTO-VOICE / PHOTO NARRATIVE

- Photo-voice or photo narrative is another way of giving all children a way of communicating something which is important to them or something which they may perceive to be important to you as a researcher.
- Cameras can be digital, disposable, professional or camera phones / iPad depending on what you as a researcher and the children are comfortable using.
- Children can work autonomously, together or in partnership with teachers, siblings, parents etc.
- Photos can be chosen together and printed. Prints can be revisited over time with the children in informal interviews.

TRY PHOTO-VOICE NOW:

If you would like to take part in an art-based method and see the results, use Twitter or email and take a photo which represents for you:

(1) Your take away from the summer school:

#photovoice1

(2) Something that challenged you or your perceived ideas:

#photovoice2

(3) Something that made you happy:

#photovoice3

@montigirl

or

sinead.matson.2012@mumail.ie

RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY

- As a researcher in an ethnographic, arts-based, participatory study you are a fundamental part of the research.
- You are interpreting what you see, hear, experience.
- Cognitive that you are co-constructing knowledge and are privileged to be allowed to enter the child's world and represent what they allow you represent to others such as interpretations of their drawings, photos, actions and words.
- Position of power – mindful of power relations.

THE CHILDREN CHOSE TO TAKE PHOTOS OF ME BECAUSE I BECAME IMPORTANT IN THEIR CLASSROOM DURING THE DAY

- Images redacted

THEY TOOK PHOTOS OF ME AND OF THE
“FISH” I HELPED THEM TO DRAW

- Images redacted

THEY WERE VERY INTERESTED IN MY IDENTITY AND LOVED THAT I WORE MY I.D. CARD JUST LIKE THEY WORE THEIRS.

- Images redacted

THEY WROTE MY NAME IN THEIR COPY BOOKS
BECAUSE THEY WERE WATCHING ME WRITING THEIR
NAMES IN MY FIELD NOTES JOURNAL.

- Images redacted

RESEARCHER'S PHOTO-OBSERVATIONS

- Images redacted

RESEARCHER'S PHOTO-OBSERVATIONS

- Images redacted

RESEARCHER'S PHOTO-OBSERVATIONS

- Images redacted

RESEARCHER'S PHOTO-OBSERVATIONS

- Images redacted

AMAN'S* DRAWINGS

*NOT HIS REAL NAME

- Images redacted

INTERPRETING CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS:

- Images redacted

INTERVIEWING A CHILD WHILE THEY DRAW

- Images redacted

- Images redacted

DRAW A PICTURE OF WHAT YOU DO IN WORK EVERY DAY

- Don't put your name on it.
- Use the A3 pages and markers.
- Tweet it or email it to @montigirl or Sinead.matson.2012@mumail.ie
- Go to twitter – try to figure out who they are and what they do based on their picture.

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

- What can you do with the data?
- The data should tell you about the children who live in this particular community, at this particular time in their lives.
- This data can feed into:
 - Co-designing school curricula and policy
 - Teacher training
 - Nurse / doctor or carer training in the area
 - Local area design – town planning
 - Health care
 - School refusal
 - Legislation



THANK YOU!

Please contact me for further information or academic reading material to support the workshop:

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