



Real Life Methods

Part of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods

Young people's orientations to education: quantitative and qualitative evidence

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The issue

- How are young people's educational expectations and aspirations shaped?
- What can addressing this, tell us about current social inequalities?

Background: class conundrum

Methodological focus:

- I will bring together different data sources: locating qualitative evidence in relation to broader patterns, so we can interrogate typical and atypical experiences.

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Emilia: School is very important in my life, cause I go, I spend a lot of my time there and even when I'm at home I've got homework and stuff like that and its going to be very important in future life as well. So if I do badly at school then that's going to damage what I can do in the future.

AB: So, is the school important in your life? How important is it to you?

Katie: school?

AB: Yes

Katie: well, its quite important because I spend a lot of my life at school. But I quite enjoy it at school, so, apart from the lessons.

AB: can I ask you if there is anyone on this map who you think has influenced you or who influences you at the moment

Katie: Er, well, I think my parents influence me

AB: In what way?

Katie: just like not to do bad things and like..

AB: like er, for instance, can you make me an example?

Katie: Er, like they taught me like to put my priorities and stuff, yeah.

AB: And so, what are your priorities; what do you think are the priorities they have taught you?

Katie: Well my priorities should be my work and stuff first, yeah

She is then asked if these really are her priorities:

Katie: Well, well, because I've got exams like soon, they are at the moment but when, when I just go to school, well er, I do my homework before everything else but like I don't mean that my work's the most important thing ..in my life, do you know what I mean?

Billy:important at the moment because it's er, just like its, getting prepared for the future and , er, meet new people every day and .. its quite enjoyable as well, yeah.

AB: Are there days that are better than others or is it always good?

Billy: er, its always quite, I always enjoy it.

AB: I'd like to ask you something regarding your future. Do you ever wonder what your, what your future will be like?

Billy: No, not really, because at school a few weeks ago we had an options evening where you could go in and look what – like the army and that comes in and tried to get you to want to go in.

AB: Okay

Billy: And there were so many things I, I would like to do, I just can't make up my mind

- *Sophie: Um, at the moment [school's] like not very important, but probably next year when I'm taking, I'm choosing what I'm taking I think it'll become more important to me*
- *AB: okay. So at the moment though its not, its not that important?*
- *Sophie: not that important because I take a lot of subjects, you know, that I don't really enjoy, so its like I don't, you know, don't really like them.*

def expects to go to university * academic motivation * one or both parents went to uni Crosstabulation

one or both parents went to uni			academic motivation		Total	
			positive	not positive		
No H.E. background	def expects to go to university	less likely, or no	Count	90	133	223
			% within def expects to go to university	40.4%	59.6%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	64.3%	81.1%	73.4%
	very likely	Count	50	31	81	
		% within def expects to go to university	61.7%	38.3%	100.0%	
		% within academic motivation	35.7%	18.9%	26.6%	
Total			Count	140	164	304
			% within def expects to go to university	46.1%	53.9%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
H.E. background	def expects to go to university	less likely, or no	Count	32	45	77
			% within def expects to go to university	41.6%	58.4%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	34.4%	54.9%	44.0%
	very likely	Count	61	37	98	
		% within def expects to go to university	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%	
		% within academic motivation	65.6%	45.1%	56.0%	
Total			Count	93	82	175
			% within def expects to go to university	53.1%	46.9%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

def expects to go to university * academic motivation * one or both parents went to uni Crosstabulation

one or both parents went to uni				academic motivation		Total
				positive	not positive	
No H.E. background	def expects to go to university	less likely, or no	Count	90	133	223
			% within def expects to go to university	BILLY	SOPHIE	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	64.3%	JACK	73.4%
	very likely	Count	50	31	81	
		% within def expects to go to university	EBONY	38.3%	100.0%	
		% within academic motivation	35.7%	18.9%	26.6%	
Total			Count	140	164	304
			% within def expects to go to university	46.1%	53.9%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
H.E. background	def expects to go to university	less likely, or no	Count	32	45	77
			% within def expects to go to university	41.6%	58.4%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	34.4%	54.9%	44.0%
	very likely	Count	61	37	98	
		% within def expects to go to university	EMILIA	37.8%	100.0%	
		% within academic motivation	KATIE	45.1%	56.0%	
Total			Count	93	82	175
			% within def expects to go to university	53.1%	46.9%	100.0%
			% within academic motivation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

conclusion

- Data helps explore subjectivities as they relate to diverse contexts; providing evidence on classed frames of reference - normal expectations probably better captures diversity than notions of cultural difference.
- Locating qualitative data facilitates analysis of inter and intra class commonalities and difference.
- Analysis contributes to formulating questions for longitudinal design.