

Teachers as “Public Practitioners”: An Ethnographic Study of English Teachers in Primary Schools in Vietnam

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My research is based on a year-long ethnographic study in several primary schools in Vietnam to understand how English Teachers live and breathe their job everyday at school. The study attempted to understand the teachers' work from their perspective and on their terms. The underlying ontology is a social one (a Social Ontology), which views the teachers as a social, public unit who teach the way those around them teach based on a public, mutual understanding and interpretation that makes up their lifeworld at their schools and beyond (social group, community etc.). The main ethnographic method used were 'Participant observation' and 'Ethnographic fieldnotes'. 'Participant observation' helped me get into the 'role' of the teachers and understand their 'lifeworld' and what they impute their way of teaching to on a daily basis. This involved me teaching English in schools as well, but in a way I imagined the English Teachers taught. 'Ethnographic fieldnotes' helped me record the teachers' daily lives in a way that was rich and 'thick'. I drew from literary techniques to help make the teachers' daily lives at school 'pop out' of the page in ways that preserve the feel of being there. This presentation will share some findings from the study and calls for a re-evaluation of how we look at researching English Language Teaching inside a school setting. The key is seeing teachers as “Public Practitioners”.

Online Profile

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