code acts in education
learning through code/learning to code

ESRC seminar series 2014-15

Seminar 2: Code Acts in Educational Institutions
University of Edinburgh, John MacIntyre Centre,
Friday 9 May 2014

Programme

10:00 Registration
10:30 Welcome & introduction
10:45 Jenny Ozga, University of Oxford
   Governing by Inspection: Coded Knowledge
11:45 Matt Finn, University of Durham
   Forging Futures in a Data-Based School
12:30 Discussion: Coding educational data
13:00 Lunch
14:00 Simon Buckingham-Shum, Open University
   Theory-Free Learning Analytics?
14:45 Sian Bayne & Jeremy Knox, University of Edinburgh
   Multimodal Profusion in MOOCs
15:30 Cabaret conversation: Have educational institutions been
   transformed by code?
16:00 Depart
Abstracts

Governing By Inspection: Coded Knowledge
Jenny Ozga, University of Oxford
This paper draws on recent and current research on data and education governance in Europe and on governing by inspection in three systems (Sweden, Scotland and England) to look at the extent to which data systems frame knowledge production, distribution and use in governing schooling. The paper looks at two main areas of interaction between data and knowledge in the inspection process: firstly, the processes surrounding the encoding of evidence in interaction between performance data and other (embodied, enacted) sources of inspection judgement, and secondly, the role and influence of commercial companies in data provision and in training inspection teams in data analysis and interpretation. The main purpose of the paper is to identify the changing nature of knowledge—the focus on ‘actionable knowledge’ that is created by the complexity and scale of information, along with the growth of a market in knowledge production and use.

Forging Futures in a Data-Based School
Matt Finn, University of Durham
Data-based living is transforming institutions and reconfiguring people’s lived experience of the present and of possible futures. One site of these changes is the school. Here, a proliferation of data to enable judgement about learning, which promises the ability to enact ever earlier interventions, is resulting in the binding of different actors’ futures together. Teachers and pupils become responsible for securing each other’s futures through the co-production of learning data. This paper represents a contribution to accounts of data-based living examining not only the making and circulation of data but how these changes are experienced by pupils and staff. In particular I find that young people reframe data issues away from narratives of technological possibility or tyranny, or even concerns about privacy. Instead I argue that they call attention to the way that data is mediating the everyday interactions and relationships of care, judgement and inspiration in education.

Theory-Free Learning Analytics?
Professor Simon Buckingham-Shum, Open University
Learning Analytics is an emerging field investigating the implications for learning of faster feedback loops based on computational analytics on digital data. It is prone to all the critiques of how “code acts” in other domains of application, and would benefit from a richer dialogue. I will give examples of learning analytics, and consider how their design and deployment perpetuate different kinds of assumptions and values that educators should care about.

Multimodal Profusion in MOOCs
Dr Sian Bayne & Jeremy Knox, University of Edinburgh
Digital literacy is often considered to be a set of identifiable skills or a broad range of socio-cultural practices. It has become a potent term within a field which frequently assumes that inevitable changes are sweeping both educational institutions and the wider society; changes that are signalled by the increasing ubiquity of digital networks in particular. This talk presents an alternative view of digital literacy through a discussion of ‘E-learning and Digital Cultures’ (known as EDCMOOC), a Massive Open Online Course offered in January 2013 by the University of Edinburgh in partnership with Coursera. The profusion of multimodal artefacts produced in response to the EDCMOOC constitutes a set of sociomaterial entanglements, in which human beings and technologies each play a part. By looking at these examples, we will suggest that sociomaterial multimodality offers a different way of thinking about digital literacy: not as a set of representational practices, but rather as complex enactments of knowledge, specific to particular contexts and moments.