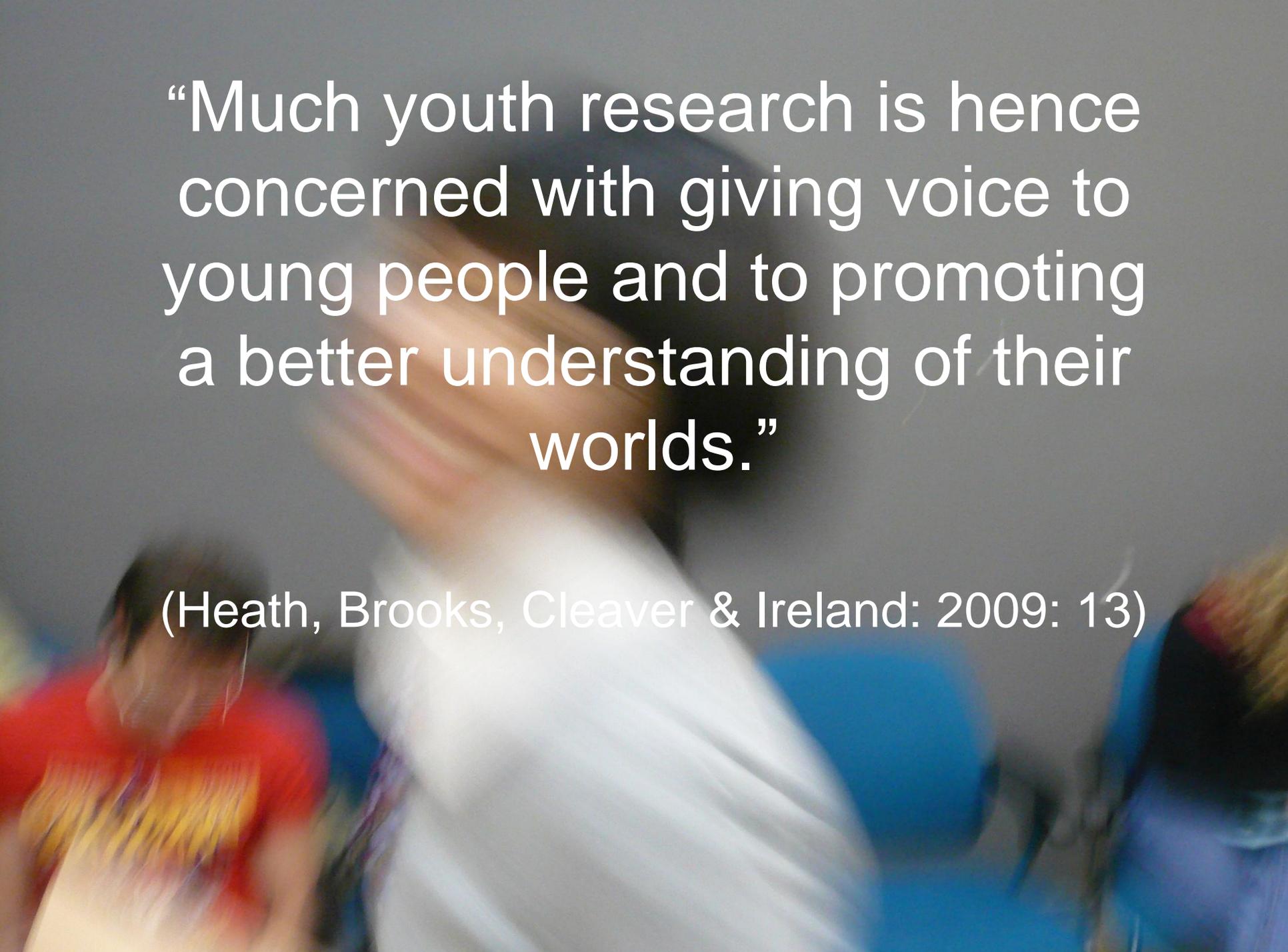


Questioning failure and success in secondary education from young people stories

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Re-thinking the concept of success and failure in Secondary school: an analysis of the relation of young people with *Savoir*" (EDU2008-03287)

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The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of several people in motion. A person in a white shirt is in the foreground, moving from left to right. To the left, a person in a red shirt is visible. To the right, a person in a blue shirt is visible. The overall scene suggests a busy, active environment.

“Much youth research is hence concerned with giving voice to young people and to promoting a better understanding of their worlds.”

(Heath, Brooks, Cleaver & Ireland: 2009: 13)

Research Objectives

- Reconceptualize the academic interpretations of young people school success and failure.
- Develop a methodological process that allows to do research *with* and not *on* young people.
- Contrast the views of a group of 20 young people about how school and other institutions build their identities as succeed and failure people.
- Contribute without romantization to build an school narrative where young people could be recognized beyond stereotypes and classifications.

“Youth researchers should neither portray young people as ‘victims or dupes to structure’ nor ‘erroneously celebrate them as completely free actors’ for the ideological purposes: instead, that ‘we must simple listen to what young people themselves have to say when making sense of their own lives’.”

(Stephen & Squires, 2003:161 at Heath et al, 2009:13)



Key notion: students' relationship with experiences of *savoir*

- Charlot (1992:80) has defined this relation as a meaningful relation; as value relation between an individual or a group and the process and products of *savoir*.
- A *savoir* relation is a relation between a subject with the world, the self and others (not only with the schools curriculum contents and rules).
- It is a relation with a series of activities, and also, it is localized in time, as space for activities (Charlot, 1992:78).

Knowledge and Savoir

- Conrado: They are two related themes,... We could say they are synonymous depending how we see them,...
Knowledge is all what a person knows... All giving form to his/her mind and all what s/he knows.
Savoir is something a bit different,... we could say that is the way a person behaves,... how s/he knows how things should be,.. It would be the form how knowledge behaves. Knowledge would be the warehouse where is everything, and savoir is how you behave taking into account this knowledge.

Key notion: students' relationship with
experiences of *savoir*

- How a young person affronts the duty of learning in a world shared with others.
- Represent and analyse the symbolic, active and temporal relation of a subject who is insert in a social relation (Vadeboncoueur & Patel Stevens, 2005).

Methodological approach

- Narrative methodology (Clandinin, & Connelly, 2000) guides the collaborative construction of **biographical accounts** through **creative interviews** (Douglas, 1985).
- Young people bring into conversations their stories and meaningful evidences of their experiences.



I untitled this photo "The power of the camera". This with the flower was untitled "Death life". I was leaving everything intensively; or with happiness and joy or negativity and pessimism. I liked to speak about paradoxes, the existence of infinite...all very extreme.



- Eric: Yes, I found in this photo something we told. It was taken when I changed my group of friends,... and it was the time when my father died. These two events distinguished my secondary education,... I will be searching for more examples of that time.

Methodological approach

- 20 in depth stories –with 10 young men, and 10 young woman;
- 10 considered as success students during their secondary education, and 10 with no success in front school expectations.
- Each researcher participate in one or two biographical narratives.

Methodological contributions

- Sharing different forms of relation with young people and ways of writing the biographic account.
- The construction of each story as a relational encounter.
- Embody the subjects' accounts.
- Build the research process including also the researchers experiences and doubts.

Possible focus of the analysis

- (a) Critical episodes during school transitions, considering their current values, ideals and aspirations.
- (b) The *savoir* on their self and their personal capabilities.
- (c) The emergence of the unknown (representations that become invisible in research on school failure and success).

Some results

(1) We can outline the emerging of counter-narrative that clash with the common idea of what success or un-success means into the scholastic milieu.

- In some of the collaborators success has been experienced as personal failure.

Maria: I consider my self as an academic success victim

Some results

(2) Their experiences of savoir are far away from the educational institution.

- Students localize them mostly in extra school activities and relationships with friends and school mates.

E: How did you organize yourself to study (Japanese)?

Xavier: It was as a hobby; firstly, we started searching information through Internet, you know it was tipic, we took Hiragama, the Kataragama to learn how to write, and later we bought some books, but everything was autodidactic.

Some results

(3) Both give relevant information about what means an (un)problematic student.

Xavier: You don't have problems if you study everyday, everyday, do all the exercises and homework indicated by teachers and,... If you study two or three days before the examen you could take 8, 9 or 10 marks.

Some results

- (4) Both consider that their voices and opinions are not taking into account by their teachers (and families).

Emma: (as reaction to a teachers plan to go to Perpignan) We did a good plan to go to the Country Bask: budget, hotel and different cultural visits, such as to the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao. However a group of teachers didn't accept our suggestion and blackmail us: If you go to Perpignan you could go to the Country Bask..

Teachers don't like our suggestions (...) Next year they didn't organize the journey to Perpignan.

Some results

- (5) Exigency on students is not based on trust and respect but in the imposition of forms of control.
- These conditions produce dissociated identity attitudes and dissatisfaction experiences on both successful and un-successful students.

Eric: (causes of his school disaffection)
Bring uniform, and the little freedom you had there. They didn't allow you to do anything: nor use the mobile phone, nor eating , nor going out between classes. We spend many hours but we don't have time to do anything.

Some results

- (5) Exigency on students is not based on trust and respect but in the imposition of forms of control.
- These conditions produce dissociated identity attitudes and dissatisfaction experiences on both successful and un-successful students.

P: Did you get bored?
Emma: Yes, because always it was the same. I was good with the study. What they wanted me to do whether in one minute I understood everything? Later I become turn off, and had conflicts with teachers. Sometimes I was expeled out from the classroom.

- Clara: I think it could be interesting talk about my relation with savoir in the secondary education. The very best memory of this time was being with friends,... The rest... I remember all as very boring. How we are going to do? What can I bring?

Guille: Maybe what better represent my path through secondary school is that it was a time that is over and that's all. Maybe what it means is NOTHING. It's a closed chapter and that's all.

- THANK YOU!!!!!!