

Critical Situated Learning in Teacher Education: Socio-Material Practices of Social Context, Place, and Narration Towards Community Well-being

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Abstract

Through research-based examples from community-based teacher education courses in Saskatoon, this presentation will discuss recent developments in learning theory and implications for socio-ecological pedagogy. In particular, the workshop will elaborate on critical situated learning with a focus on practices of social context, narration, and place. Such learning has been shown to occur among individuals in relational, emplaced, and spatially specific ways that go beyond the cognitive. The session will also examine how such learning is not simply deconstructive but also productive, affecting not only students' abilities to think differently but also their capacity to act differently in relationship with others. The presentation will examine how attention to these practices i) underscores the degree to which students are implicitly shaped by social context, narration, and place, as well as ii) offers educators and students tools for acting on and through these practices towards greater socio-ecological learning and community well-being.

Social context refers to the ways that the networks of relations that surround students both within and beyond their educational setting are central to their capacity to engage in socio-ecological thought and action. The process of telling and internalizing stories about the world is what is intended by the pedagogical category of *narration*. By becoming more aware of the productive dimensions of the stories we tell and retell through education, educators and learners alike can use narration practices towards more productive ends. Finally, the use of the term *place* attends to the ways in which our locations – both local and global – similarly influence how we understand and act in the world. The presentation will examine how education can better attend to both how our understandings are shaped by such spatial and physical material conditions, but also how such conditions can be used more intentionally in educational practice, and potentially in students' subsequent efforts to contribute to social change. Through examples of practice drawn from research on teacher education, this presentation will elaborate how such socio-material practices can be more intentionally taken up to address intersecting socio-ecological issues through education in more in-depth and systemic ways.