

Rethinking Educational Ethnography 2023

The Tenth Rethinking Educational Ethnography Conference, University of Education Freiburg, Germany

Conference culture and history

At ECER 2010 in Helsinki, researchers from the Ethnography Network discussed emerging concerns about virtual ethnography and discovered a shared interest. This shared interest started the first Rethinking Educational Ethnography conference. Since then, nine international conferences were organized in Borås, Helsinki, Porto, Barcelona, Napoli, Copenhagen, Klaipėda, Budapest, and Graz. Each year, participants discuss topics related to ethnographic epistemology, methodology, and practice. It is a small conference with a maximum of 20 papers. Those are distributed prior to the conference. Every paper session is scheduled for 40 minutes, 10 minutes for the author(s) to emphasise main points and arguments, and the remaining 30 minutes for a common conversation and discussion of the paper. Participants are from a wide range of experienced as well as early career researchers from all parts of Europe.

The tenth conference builds on the spirit of previous Rethinking Educational Ethnography conferences and is organised by the Department of General Education, University of Education Freiburg, Department of Education, TU Dortmund University and the European Educational Research Association EERA, Network 19 Ethnography.

Conference theme: *Ethnography and Emotions*

Against the backdrop of long-standing debates on the cultural politics (Ahmed 2004) or management (Hochschild 2012) of emotions, the situatedness of ethnographic knowledge (Haraway 1988) as well as an increasing interest in the affective constitution of social relations (Reckwitz 2015; Slaby & Scheve 2019), the upcoming conference aims at examining the relationship between ethnography and emotions such as fear (Lindner 1981), shame (Eribon 2018), anger (Rackow, Schupp & Scheve 2012) or happiness (Wulf 2020) in educational contexts. The role of emotions in ethnography is associated with theoretical, ethical, inequality-related and methodological issues. This aligns with an interest in exploring the relationships between the bodies of researchers and research participants, their respective social positioning and the audience of ethnographic knowledge productions. Emotions confront ethnographers not only with the question of how to document them in the first place, but also with the challenge of

understanding and engaging with their elusive as well as overwhelming individual or collective character. Even if emotions remain largely not only fluid but also diffuse and ambivalent, they are strongly connected with questions of power and vulnerability, which can have long-lasting effects (Zembylas 2020). In this respect, a preoccupation with emotions leads to central questions on ethnography as a method, discipline, and research attitude in the sense of a historically embedded rethinking. Very different meanings have been attributed to emotions in ethnography's recent history. These include approaches suggesting limiting or controlling emotions (Beatty 2010) with a view on the so-called weakness of ethnographic data; using them strategically e.g. autoethnographically (Lubrich & Stodulka 2019); to engage with sensorial data (Pink 2009); deconstructing them representation-critically (Fichte 2005); or to make them visible – e.g. via reconstruction of atmospheres (Schroer & Schmitt 2018) – as a medium of comprehensive relations of inequalities (Wellgraf 2018).

Call for papers

The Rethinking Educational Ethnography Conference 2023 invites papers reflecting and building on current discussions of ethnographic epistemology, methodology, and practice. We specifically invite papers addressing one or several of the following issues:

- *Ethnographically grasping emotions*: What interpretations of emotions (in educational contexts) does ethnography offer? How does ethnography contribute to the research and theorisation of emotions?
- *Emotion in Education | Education in Emotion*: How can the relationship between education and emotion be ethnographically traced? What grip does emotionally informed ethnography have on education? And likewise: What grip does educational ethnography have on emotions?
- *Research relationships*: How are emotions shaped in the field? How do they establish, interrupt, frame, etc. connections to and within the field? What role do the unequally situated bodies of all actors play in this?
- *Research ethics*: How does the focus on the emotional enrich recent academic debates on research ethics, positionality and representation? Do emotions raise ethical questions about the field and one's own actions? What are the emotional joys and limits of researchers and research participants? Which ethical strategies are used from previous research or from one's own (biographical) experiences in and outside of the field?

- *Precarious fields and vulnerable research participants*: How can emotions be dealt with in a responsible way in precarious fields with vulnerable research participants? How can we describe these fields and experiences in a way of acquiring knowledge without overtly focussing on vulnerabilities and running the risk of essentialising them?
- *Data production, analysis and presentation of results*: How can emotions be appropriately interpreted and articulated with regard to the consistency of research results, ongoing discussions on ethnographical quality criteria and different publics in unequal societal conditions?

Abstract submission

The Rethinking Educational Ethnography Conference enables and encourages active participation from researchers in all stages of professional qualification. Abstracts may refer to completed studies, field work, or work in progress and should contain main arguments, fieldwork methods, analytical methods, and conclusions. Abstracts should not exceed 400 words (excluding references) and need to be submitted in English to ree2023@ph-freiburg.de using the [REE 2023 Abstract Template](#).

Accepted full papers, due on 10.03.23, will build upon submitted abstracts and should contain a minimum of 2000 and up to 5000 words. All papers are shared among conference participants to be able to spend less time on presentations and focus on conversation and discussion during the sessions. The conference links to the Journal [Ethnography and Education](#), which welcomes submissions of papers that have been developed for the conference.

Timeline

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| Submission starts, Call for Papers: | 21.10.22 |
| Submission ends: | 30.11.22 |
| Review results announced: | 21.12.22 |
| Registration opens: | 15.01.23 |
| Full paper submission ends: | 10.03.23 |
| Registration deadline: | 10.03.23 |
| Conference proceedings and program announced: | 17.03.23 |
| Conference Dates: | 20./21.4.23 |

The REE 2023 conference organisers:

Bettina Fritzsche (Freiburg), Florian Weitkämper (Freiburg), Magnus Frank (Dortmund), Nelly Alfandari (London/Barcelona), Bianca Baßler (Freiburg), Ursina Jaeger (Tübingen) and Lalitha Chamakalayil (Muttentz, Schweiz)

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