ITL Research Roundtables 2015

“Love thy neighbour!” (Maybe not). Navigating researcher and participant positioning within and across research paradigms

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This roundtable will focus on methodological issues arising within a doctoral research project that adopted a close-up, ethnographic approach. The study aimed to explore the everyday perceptions and realities of research and teaching relationships with academics located within a ‘health’ Faculty at the University of Sydney. A better understanding of their structures, cultures, agency and identities that fostered or inhibited nexus relationships was sought. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with academics and research students, participant observation, documents and websites. Methodological questions that surfaced regarding the researcher-researched relationship were:
• how close is close in close-up higher education research?;
• what might be the potential risks and ramifications when researching ‘at home’?;
• why negotiate and embed reciprocity within the research act?; and
• how to abide by, adapt and interpret often limiting ethical protocols

In response to these questions, this roundtable will invite participants to identity and reflect on their predominant research paradigm(s). We will frame our inquiry around your sense of ‘near or far’ with respect to researcher-researched positioning, and with your data, and why?

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