Developing Practice With Breakout Rooms:
A Diffracted Intra-Active Reading for Professional Development

David Michael Barnard

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7372-1886
University of Aberdeen, UK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adopting an agential realist perspective, this study reads data from a literature search into breakout rooms through the theory of intra-action and the researcher's experiences working as an EAP teacher across universities in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter is also an exploration of how a diffractive grating theory approach can help promote a closer reading of data, theory, and experience to inform professional development. The resulting conversation discusses points of wonder ranging from an active learning bias to increases in planning time, advice for giving instructions, and the importance of a good monitor. Although the chapter starts philosophically, the results are orientated more to the practitioner. It is hoped that the resulting conversations around the researcher's practice will help spur the reader into new and interesting areas for their own development.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on an original and unconventional diffractive study that aims to contribute to the discussion around the practical use of breakout rooms (BORs)

when teaching online. Insights are gleaned from experiences the author gained whilst teaching on summer pre-sessional courses in higher educational institutions across the U.K. during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses an original diffractive grating technique created by the author, which produces a conversation between experience, theory, and current educational research into BORs. The resultant dialogue, as related in the results and discussion section, offers authentic insights into practice with BORs that are contextually, theoretically (Intra-action [Barad, 2007]) and research based. Such insights are designed to perturb (disrupt) thinking around practice and to aid development through critical engagement by the reader. Thus, this study aims to be useful in two ways; first, to provide a conversation around using BORs that can be used critically to improve practice. Second, it offers an example of how such conversations can be achieved through a 'diffraction on action' approach to professional development.

The chapter begins with a brief consideration of the research question for the study. The first section then goes into detail regarding the study's methodology and diffraction on action. Additionally, it provides information on how the diffractive grating theory approach (DGTA) can be applied and gives an example of the method in practice. The second section of the chapter takes a more unconventional tone by replicating the conversational nature of the method to produce an exploration of practice with BORs. The chapter has been split into two sections so readers who are less interested in the research methodology and philosophy can quickly move to the more practically relevant information. However, should you do this, please be aware that the fundamental nature of the study does not follow 'normal' traditions for western scientific discourse.

Research Question

The chapter's introduction clearly states the two aims of the chapter, to both provide a dialogue for further critical practice and explain and give an example of diffraction on action. Both aims are designed to provide useful information for the reader regarding their thinking and practice. To help guide the study, the following research question emerged:

- What differences emerge from the diffractive grating theory approach as mattering, and how do disclosed intra-active relations bring meaning for practice with BORs?

This is a complicated research question due to the nature of the philosophy and methodology of the piece. As such, you may wish to come back to this later. However, to help demystify the language somewhat, a more traditional research question may

26 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/developing-practice-with-breakout-rooms/308949

Related Content

Data Analysis for Oil Production Prediction
Christine W. Chan (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 353-360).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-analysis-oil-production-prediction/10844

Learning with Partial Supervision
Abdelhamid Bouchachia (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1150-1157).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/learning-partial-supervision/10967

Enclosing Machine Learning
Xunkai Wei (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 744-751).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/enclosing-machine-learning/10903

Literacy in Early Childhood: Multimodal Play and Text Production
Sally Brown (2020). *Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 1-19).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/literacy-in-early-childhood/237410

Statistical Web Object Extraction
Jun Zhu, Zaiqing Nieand Bo Zhang (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1854-1858).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/statistical-web-object-extraction/11071