

RESEARCH REPORT

Tales of Re-entry to Adult High School Programs: A Rhizomatic (De)(Re)Tangling

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Ph.D. Abstract

This rhizomatic research is an experimental wondering and wandering with a Deleuzian-Guattarian mindset. The purpose of this study is to de-re-territorialize *affective* adults who have been *dropping out* and *dropping back in* to high school. Adults who are *dropping out* and *dropping in* often find themselves placed at society's margins. These margins occur outside of the (ir)rational system of education that purposes to shape its body of students, its *product*, its graduates, through the attainment of a high school diploma. The re-entry (*dropping in*) process is the focus in this study. Thus, attention is given to possible (re)consideration of re-entry high school programs by (*dis*)(re)tracting the territorialized views of these adult learners.

The concepts offered by Deleuze and Guattari enable a range of potentiality found in the rhizomatic connections *becoming* produced in the intra-relational assemblage among participants and researcher. In viewing the adult learners as *affective*, their own subjectivities are continually *becoming*, but the researcher is also impacted by the *becoming* possibilities of the emerging assemblages. Rhizomatic (non)methodology informs rhizo intra-relational (non)method referred to as *intra-view* (St. Pierre, 2019; Masny, 2016) and facilitates the unfolding of the discussions that occur *among* participants and researcher. The researcher's memories, personal teaching diary, relevant reading throughout the writing, and former teacher-student relationships with the participants inform the emerging rhizome. Rhizomatics intra-weave *cartographies* in creation of the dissertation and challenges the researcher/the reader in becoming (*dis*)(re)tracted to think something new within re-entry programming that is contingent upon openings created by thinking frames of post qualitative research.

Rhizoanalysis in this dissertation raises questions, not conclusions (Honan & Bright, 2016; Waterhouse & Arnott, 2016; Masny, 2017; Reinertsen, 2017; St. Pierre, 2019), about high school re-entry programs. The *cartographies* (*dis*)(re)tract the researcher to think about the striated constitutions of re-entry programs that seem to ignore the life experiences of re-entry adult learners and fail to consider *other* curricula that may be more reflective of adult learner interests and needs. Why do they drop back into a system that looks so similar to the one from which they dropped out? The only thing different is the physical setting and the age of learners. Are they not merely encountering the same requirements of a system which they once exited? What are the merging possibilities that might affect re-entry high school programs to be experienced/designed differently than those which exists for teen-aged students?

The assemblages emerging among the participants and the researcher in this study (*dis*)(re)tract the researcher to think more about the potential possibilities for re-entry high school programs, including (re)consideration of the curricula and required number of credits necessary for completion. In addition to the (*dis*)(re)tractions dwelling around the topic of re-entry, the assemblages and processes continually produce the transforming researcher in her own *becoming* as a post qualitative/post human philosopher. Her experiences as an educator, her re-entry to a doctoral degree in Philosophy later in life, and her *becoming* journey in academia become entangled in the rhizome. These entanglements wind and unwind as the rhizome moves and fills the blank pages of the experimenting dissertation.

Final Thoughts Emerging From the Rhizome

The rhizome that emerges out of the intra-related assemblage of (non)data generates complexity around the adult learner dropping back into high school. Despite the varying life events that affect these learners, the re-entry program remains unaffected to deliver a curriculum, a right of passage, that validates their life experience and learning that has transpired. They drop back in to the same rigid requirements that define graduation credentials rooted in curricula that was developed for the teen learners in high school spaces. Their re-entry is a rather unilateral approach to educating a multitude of learners. The concept of multi-schooling and multi-curricula is non-existent for the re-entry learner. The re-entry program does not fit the experiences of these adult *becoming* learners.

Diversity in classrooms exists at all age levels. Notions of differentiated instruction exist to promote learning for all within inclusive classroom spaces. But, when I reflect on the events of the adults in my study, the curricula designed for teenaged learners is not relevant to these adult learners. This notion causes me to pause and wonder beyond these learners. I think about the vast diverse populations of learners in schools, and I wonder if differentiated instruction and notions of inclusion are truly meeting the needs of all learners. Do educators and policy makers really understand all needs of diverse learners? Are we fooling ourselves? Do we need to be *(dis)(re)tracted* to something else? As I find an exit in this rhizome, national statistics are being released that puts the province in which I live at the very bottom of performance in science, mathematics and literacy among fifteen year old learners in our country. I am becoming *(dis)(re)tracted* to think about something else. What about the concept of multi-schooling in multi-spaces? What might that look like? What might it look like across multi-ages? Could we be doing something better in our education of people – not just re-entry learners, but all learners? Nothing changes until something changes ...

About the Researcher

Dr. Shelley Kokorudz is an associate professor and chair in the Dept. of Educational Psychology & Student Services in the Faculty of Education. She graduated with her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Manitoba and later completed her Master of Education from Brandon University. In 2020, she completed her PhD at the University of Regina. She is excited to be currently developing a research agenda around nature-based approaches to teaching and learning. Dr. Kokorudz is also very involved with the faculty's PENT program, focusing on the education of Indigenous pre-service teachers.