GENERATING VALID DATA THROUGH A FUSION OF AESTHETIC APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

The aim with this paper is to outline different approaches that enable the researcher to analyse the learning processes in an organisation through emotional situations without asking direct questions. Analysis of emotional data related to learning processes is enriched by supplementing the traditional semi-structured interviews with more creative and aesthetic approaches. The approaches include interviews based on photography (Petersen & Østergaard, 2004), interviews based on drawing (Vince & Broussine, 1996) and interviews based on 'the double' (Gherardi, 1995). First traditional interviews were conducted, but the data failed to answer the questions about learning processes, and so the three approaches were applied to generate three different kinds of data.

1 THE ANALYTICAL CONTEXT

The project is a joint venture between The Danish University of Education and the Danish Bankers Association (DBA). DBA's interest is to investigate how to develop organisational learning in the financial sector. The financial sector has traditionally educated their staff in-house instead of using the public education system (Prahl *et al.*, 2000). One consequence of this is that the sector prefers to recruit bank clerks and rarely recruits academics†. This has the serious draw back that they prevent the potential innovation that might result from recruiting people educated in other traditions (Smistrup, 2003). Plenty of research has gone into securing diversity in the employment structure in relation to gender, age, education, cultural background, experience, nationality and personality in order to facilitate innovation (Bantel & Jackson, 1989; Brewer, 1996; Justesen, 2005). In recent years, the sector has begun to use the public education system, and at the same time it has become commonplace to use academics in corporate headquarters, but it is still rare to see academics in retail banking, and therefore there exists a very homogeneous employment structure in the retail banks.

Unemployment for academics peaked in late 2003, and at that time government presented what they called an 'academic campaign', which was aimed to 'sell' academics to the business community. The logic behind the campaign was that the academics, through the knowledge they have acquired at universities would generate innovation in companies. At the same time, a consultants' report documented that recruitment of academics resulted in growth because the academics initiated product innovation (Rambøll & IDA, 2004). It was

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† In this paper, the term 'academic' denotes a person who has completed a post-graduate study at a university. Due to the great variety of post-graduate studies, I question the validity of the use of 'academics' as a descriptive term in the financial sector.

also at that same time that a Danish bank, Sydbank, implemented a trainee program for academics. The argument for introducing the trainee program was partly that Sydbank wanted to experiment with this new type of recruits to determine whether they would live up to the expectations and would stay in the company, and partly because there was a drop in the number of applications from traditional bank clerks. Several other banks eventually followed their example. But no one has evaluated whether the academics is a good alternative to the bank clerk because the banks' recruitment strategy is unclear. According to top management, they focus on innovative employees, but in recruitment, they actually want to find substitutes for the reduced number of applications from bank clerks. So one of the purposes with this project is to find an answer for the question: "Will the academics turn out to be good substitutes for bank clerks, or will they be good innovators"?

According to the campaign for more academics it is the government's assumption that a transfer of the academic qualifications to the industries will spark innovation, but is this really the case and if it is could we identify the qualifications the academic must possess to re-invent the industry? In the consultants' report there are no answers to these questions, so we have no evidence for a connection between hiring academics and product innovation. It is, therefore, interesting to determine whether academics transfer the latest research based methods to the retail banks and develop new routines there. This is particularly interesting when you realise that most of the employed academics in the retail banks do not have an economic or financial background, but are hired because of their social communication skills. So another relevant question is: "What can the university academics bring to retail banking?"

The four Danish banks who constitute the empiric field for the analysis are Danske Bank, Sydbank, Forstædernes Bank and Ringkjøbing Bank. The urgent question in all the participating banks is whether they will manage to maintain the academics in the retail banks, because if not, the cost of their training is wasted. But a far more interesting question is whether the academics have to be a gamble, or an investment who can help develop the retail banks. The purpose of the analysis is therefore to investigate whether the employment of academics in retail banks could instigate a change in the banks' community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 2003).

I aim to produce knowledge about the learning processes that play out between academics and bank clerks. This is an interesting meeting because they have two completely different educational backgrounds and the diversity may produce new learning (Justesen, 2005); others would question a connection between change and learning (Antonacopoulou). My approach is based on situated learning in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 2003) and the object of analysis is the way academics fight their battle of legitimacy and symbolic power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2002) to acquire the symbolic, embodied and encultured knowledge (Collins, 1995; Tsoukas, 2006) before they become a genuine part of the community.

To that end, I have interviewed academics in retail banking in order to understand how they perceive the learning environment they meet in the bank and how their educational background enable them to influence the community of practice. I examined whether the academics' induction process results in a natural integration in the community of practice because the experienced bank clerks creates a positive learning environment or not.

2 THE TRADITIONAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

A semi-structured interview seems to be a viable method to generate useful data. I wanted to generate a qualitative interview that was neither a free conversation nor a tightly structured questionnaire (Kvale, 1996; Rubin, 2005; Schostak, 2005). The term 'semi-structured' implies developing an interview guide which is meant to be a list of themes that you seek to address in the interview. I set up two primary research objectives, because I believed the academics' induction could be described in terms of the learning environment in the retail banks and whether or not the academics can influence the community of practice (CoP).

The first objective was broken down into three sub-objectives; the first was to reveal the induction process of the academics. The second was to reveal situations where the academics might have acted critically towards the existing routines in the bank. The third was to determine whether academics had experienced that colleagues had encouraged the academics to apply their university knowledge to the work processes in the retail bank. The second objective was broken down into two sub-objectives: To produce a description of situations where the academics have used knowledge from the university in the work processes, and an outline of the possibilities for further education in the bank. The structure of the interview guide is illustrated below and was inspired by a case method described by Lone Karpatschof (Karpatschof, 1984):

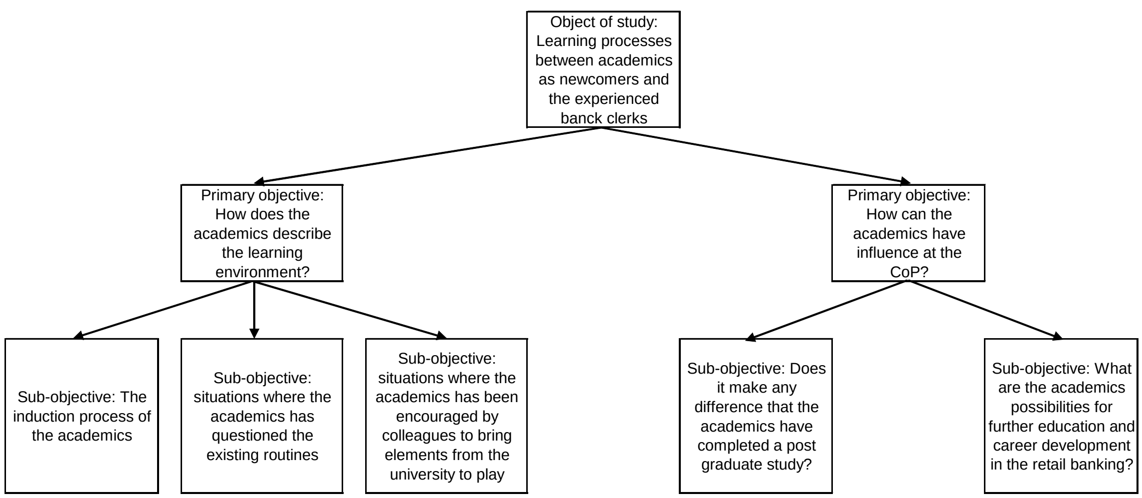

Figure 1: Interview guide

When I had conducted the first few interviews, I found that the academics were not a homogeneous group. They came from various educations that had nothing to do with finance or economy. Several came with a background in the humanities or social science, e.g. History of Ideas, Philosophy, Public Administration, Design and Communication Management and Innovation Management. The interviews revealed that the academics felt they did not use their education, which was a cause of frustration for many of them. I quickly realised that the question I should ask was not what kind of knowledge the academics managed to transfer from the university to the workplaces, but rather how the academics make a difference when they feel their education is useless in the workplace.

3 EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS

The traditional semi-structured interview is an often used method to make the first entrance into a field. Kvale mentions twelve aspects of the semi-structured interview that makes it particular useful in the qualitative research (Kvale, 1984). It would be interesting to take a closer look at the first five aspects in particular. The qualitative interview is aimed to facilitate:

1) an understanding of the life-world of the informant
2) an understanding, not just of the factual level, but also of the ‘meaning level’ because the interviewer can capture what is implied rather than said
3) a nuanced description
4) uninterpreted descriptions from the informant
5) getting the informants’ subjective and specific opinions rather than general opinions (Kvale, 1984).

Kvale wrote the article at a time when qualitative research fought a battle of legitimacy with quantitative research about quantifications, reliability and similar research principles from the positivistic school (Dahler-Larsen, 2002). Twenty years later, it is now legitimate to use semi-structured interview as the only research method, but aesthetic approaches will address the five aspects even better compared to the semi-structured interview because the semi-structured interview has a number of limitations.

I discovered the first limitation of the semi-structured interview when I wanted to ask the academics about the three sub-objectives in the first objective (concerning the learning environment made up of academics and experienced bank clerks). When I asked the academics about their induction process and whether they in any way had criticized or suggested any changes in the work routines, they all claimed that their induction period went splendidly and that there had been no need to change anything. It seemed to me that, for whatever reason, some of the informants were less than candid. I had the feeling that several of the responses were dictated by political correctness because the academics were afraid to talk badly about their new colleagues. I was not interested in the story in itself but rather in how the learning environment is experienced by the newcomer. I believe the learning environment, in terms of being open-minded towards newcomers, is very important when I want to determine how to develop the learning processes. However the topics were too emotional to talk about in a traditional semi-structured interview, because the academics were afraid to be critical towards their new colleagues.

I experienced another limitation when asking about the first sub-objective in the second objective (concerning the academics’ knowledge from university). As mentioned earlier, the traditional semi-structured interview implied that the academics did not feel they applied any knowledge from the university in their job as bank clerks, mainly because their educational background was very different from the financial and economical knowledge needed in a bank. Several similar studies have concluded that academics are trained in a theoretical universe that prepares them for a career in research, but not for a career in the business sector, although the majority of the academics end up in the private sector (AalborgUniversity & RoskildeUniversity, 2002). But is this really the case? Therefore, I began to question some of my own assumptions about knowledge and about ‘knowledge from the university’.

In the interview I only ask for the explicit and tangible knowledge that the academics are aware of. But knowledge is so much more than this; it also has a tacit dimension (Tsoukas, 2006). Furthermore, knowledge can be expressed in various forms. First of all you have certain inherited *basic skills* such as our senses, our ability to speak and live in social communities etc. These basic skills are performed tacitly. Secondly, we have the *qualifications* that we learn at school or through traditional apprenticeship or on-the-job training. These qualifications can be both explicit and tacit; some of the knowledge could be written in manuals or taught in a classroom, but much practical knowledge is tacit. Thirdly, we have the *competence* to combine certain qualifications to provide a solution to theoretical or practical problems. These competences derive from experience and can be both explicit and tacit (Jensen, 2005).

When I say knowledge is tacit, I mean that it can be tacit in more than one sense: It can be embodied knowledge as well as 'encultured' knowledge (Collins, 1995). I do not view this as two different kinds of knowledge, but rather as knowledge that influence everything we define as explicit knowledge. Embodied knowledge is knowledge about how to perform certain acts the right way, for instance a certain gesture to the colleagues. Encultured knowledge is knowledge about, for instance, what clothes to wear in a bank, what kind of language to speak etc. Tacit knowledge can not be explicated in a traditional interview situation, because it is taken for granted. When I asked the academics to describe the knowledge they brought from their education, they focused on their explicit qualifications and competences, and this narrow definition of knowledge may have provided an incomplete picture. This was a limitation in the traditional semi-structured interview; there is not enough room for reflection.

Knowledge has no existence in itself, and it is therefore not a concrete set of tools which the academics can transfer from an academic environment to a pragmatic environment (Detterman, 1993: 15). The qualifications and competences acquired at a university are impossible to separate from other qualifications and competences acquired in the same period. Therefore I chose to consider the university as a formative journey during which the individual through time is adapting a unified common knowledge (Larsen, 2003). This formative journey is weaved into his or her social network, so it is impossible to say exactly what the individual learned at the university. Therefore I needed to ask the question differently; I asked them to outline work processes and from that I can determine whether a university background makes a difference. When I asked these questions, I realised that the academics answered in 'headlines', probably because they chose to say things they thought a researcher might want to hear and therefore the detailed description was discarded as irrelevant.

Finally, I believe that the semi-structured interview limit the possible answers, because the researcher rarely gets answers from the informant that are far from the scope of the interview guide. But when the researcher is not a part of the investigated field in advance, it is difficult to know which questions are powerful and where to start.

The limitations can be summarized as follows:

1) The informants refrain from detailed emotional descriptions of their experience as newcomers in a direct semi-structured interview.

2) Emphasising the explicit and not the tacit knowledge
3) 'Headline' answers
4) The range of potential answers is defined by the interview guide

These limitations made me look for new research methods that could give me more nuanced and valid answers to my questions.

4 A FUSION OF APPROACHES

In order to find answers to my questions regarding the learning environment and the influence of the academics I looked for some approaches that could help me generate the data I needed.

4.1 Organisational photography

Organisational photography is a way to generate data for very different purposes. For instance, one can use photos as documentation in the research process, or as material for an interview. There are four different ways to conduct organisational photographing, characterised by who takes the photos and how the photos are used in the analysis (Petersen & Østergaard, 2005, p. 231). First of all, the researcher can choose to shoot pictures in the organisation herself and also to analyse the photos herself. This is called 'photo documentation', and does not involve any informants. It is a useful approach if the researcher is interested in documenting the processes rather than in understanding the relations between or emotions among, individuals in the organisation. Secondly, the researcher can choose to let the informants shoot the photos themselves and submit them to the researcher for analysis. This is useful if the researcher is interested in using the informants as co-researchers, and at the same time the informants have an opportunity to shoot the pictures without any influence from the researcher. Thirdly, the researcher can choose to take the photos herself and to have the informants participate in the analysis. In this approach, the photos are not used as documentation, but as material for discussion. This is useful if the researcher is interested in understanding the informants' relations and emotions. Fourthly, the researcher can choose to let the informants shoot the pictures themselves and have them participate in a subsequent analysis during an interview with the photos used as material for discussion rather than documentation. This is useful if the researcher aims to give the informants a high degree of self-representation, and to have them provide a wider perspective on the relational and emotional issues.

I have used the fourth approach. I conducted the organisational photography by asking two academics in two different departments to shoot pictures of learning situations they have experienced in the bank. I decided to set up a very broad theme for the pictures. I gave each of my informants a single use camera and reminded them to ask for permission if they took pictures of their colleagues. Each of the academics took about fifteen pictures, and after I had examined the photos, I interviewed each of them individually. The approach turned out to be a very useful supplement to the semi-structured interview, because I was introduced to new topics which I had missed in the traditional interviews because the informants primarily answer the questions they are asked.

One of the topics that emerged this way was loneliness. One of the academics had only taken pictures of his computer screen because that alone was his experience of the essential learning processes in the bank. He was told that all manuals for the different tasks he were supposed to solve were available on the computer, and so he looked for answers on the computer rather than by asking his colleagues. In the semi-structured interview, I got an impression of a well-integrated person, but in the interview based on the photos I got a more nuanced description of the induction process, and we talked about an 'us vs. them'-mentality in the retail bank. This loneliness came up in several other interviews based on aesthetic approaches later in the data generating process, and none of the informants thought of it as a deliberate discrimination against them, but rather as a consequence of our tendency to recruit people who resemble us. In the words of one of the academics:

"When I started in the department I was met by the attitude: "What can an academic bring to us?". It was a very black and white attitude towards me"

This means that the banks recruit people with the same educational background as themselves, and when the human resource manager decides to hire academics because they are short on traditional applicants, the bank clerks in the retail bank do not know what the academics can and can not do and it is easier to ignore or 'forget' them when new assignments is distributed in the department.

Another topic that emerged was a feeling of forced adaptation in order to be integrated in the community. The second academic had taken lots of 'social' pictures that showed him as well integrated in the community, which supported what he told me in the preceding interview. But when we discussed the photos, he told me how important he felt it was to forget his background and adopt the 'right' way to speak and act in order to fit in and become integrated in the community.

"It is like entering a new world when you go from being a student to an employee, because you talk about different things and you quickly learn how to behave. For instance, it is extremely important for you to know that it is inappropriate to not wear a shirt and tie".

This adaptation theme made me realise that it makes no difference what educational background the newcomers have; as long as they are good imitators they will learn the work processes quickly and they will become integrated in the community if and when they do not seem to be too 'academic', which, in this case, means when they do not ask too many critical questions to the processes. As one of the HR-managers told me:

"We expect the academics to 'test the waters' during their one year trainee period in order to learn how to act in the bank before they start changing anything"

But why invest in post-graduates that are far more expensive than under graduates? One answer is that the government has launched a campaign that has made it popular to hire academics in different sectors, but for no other reason than a high rate of unemployment.

To sum up, the way I used organisational photography was to have the informants bring up new topics and data in a field where I did not have a lot of experience, and where the semi-structured interview would have been of limited use. Photography was better than the semi-structured interviews because it turned out to be easier to make the informants talk about their emotions when we analysed the photos together than in a regular interview.

4.2 Drawing

In many ways the drawing approach is similar to the organisational photography approach, because you use an artefact as an instrument to make it easier for the informants to talk about emotional situations, and the informants can engage in self-reflection during the process. The drawing approach is a better starting point for a group interview, however, first of all because the informants create the drawing in the same room and do not have to take pictures in advance and unsupervised and secondly because the informants only make one drawing each instead of fifteen photos.

I invited four academics from four different departments in the same bank to participate in a focus group interview. I specifically looked for academics with different levels of experience in order to determine whether there was any development in the integration into the social community. I looked for linguistic clues, such as 'them and us'-metaphors or other indications of their integration in the department.

The way I conducted the drawing session was inspired by Russ Vince and Michael Broussine. They used drawings to generate data about how middle and senior management feels about changes in the organisation (Vince & Broussine, 1996: 11). I asked the academics to draw a picture that expressed their feelings about being newcomers in their particular departments. I did not want to ask about their feelings about being an *academic* in the department, because then I would have forced them to think of themselves as different from the other bank clerks, but I did not know whether their educational background made them feel different. I ensured them that their artistic skills were not a part of the test, and that the thoughts behind the drawings that mattered. After 20 minutes of drawing, I asked them to reflect on their drawings for a couple of minutes and then write a few comments on the back of the drawing. I asked them to select a few themes before their drawings were shown to the rest of the group. Then I asked them to discuss their drawings in turn then to explain the meaning with their own drawing. They were all asked not to be defensive but to try to listen to how the others in the group interpreted their drawings.

In the final phase, I acted as facilitator and we analysed some of the discussions. One of the recurring themes that emerged was the mutual expectations and prejudices between academics and experienced bank clerks; the bank clerks do not know what to expect from the academics and the academics do not know what to expect from the job and their new colleagues. Another recurring theme was a helpless frustration during the beginning of the trainee period, because the academics were unable to contribute and felt they were getting in the way of the experienced bank clerks. These feelings are illustrated in the drawing below in which the academic is walking up hill towards the integration in the bank, which is pictured as a large black box with arrows in the bottom showing the conservatism and the force of habits in the bank.

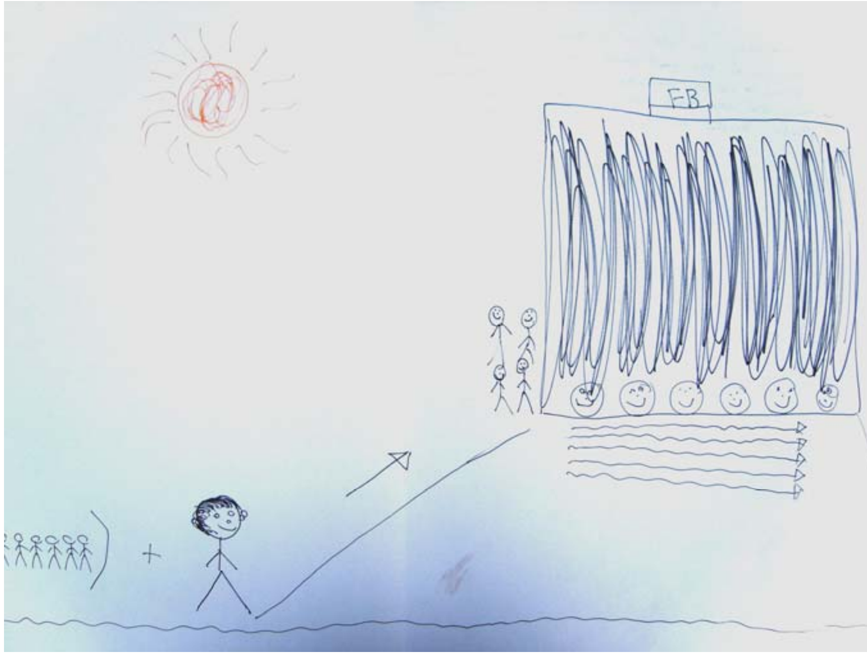

Figure 2: Drawing by an academic

Another theme in the drawings is particularly well expressed in this drawing where the informant meets an academic dilemma:

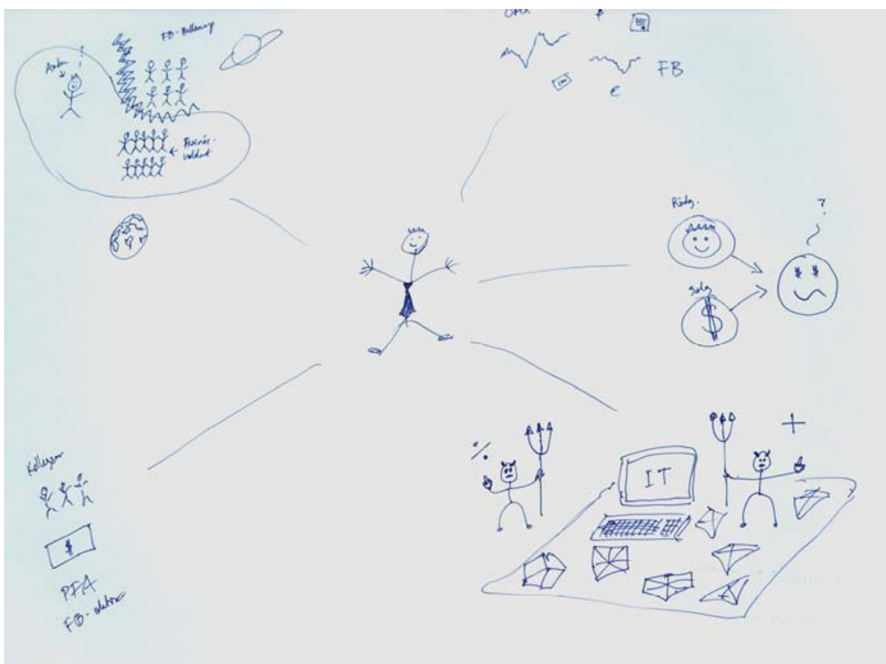

Figure 3: Drawing by an academic

This drawing expresses the dilemma between being a salesman or a counsellor for the customer. Academics traditionally lack experience with learning in practice. The trainee program is based on courses, but also on learning in practice, which means there is a lot of embodied knowledge the trainees have to learn. For instance, they mentioned learning how to make friends with the customer and to keep a conversation going and to appear interested in the customer's life and family. The academic who stands in the middle of the drawing is having a 'body of a tie' which made for an interesting discussion because all of the academics had different stories about the necessity of wearing a shirt and tie in the bank to win acceptance.

A third theme that emerged was that performance pressure which is illustrated in the following drawing:

Figure 4: Drawing by an academic

The drawing illustrates three different pressures. The academic is in the centre and is first of all feeling the pressure of the company's benchmarking illustrated by the dollar bill above him. He also feels a pressure to become accepted by his colleagues to his left, and he has drawn two butterflies on his right to symbolise the feeling in his stomach when he needed to make uninvited sales pitches. In front of him is a book supposed to illustrate his learning processes. I have been unable to determine a significant difference in the level of integration into the community of practice between the academics who had been in the bank for eighteen months and the academics who had been there for six. They all still feel different because of their educational background.

To sum up, I have used drawings to learn more about the emotional experiences of a newcomer in an environment dominated by traditionally educated bank clerks, and to evaluate what kind of learning barriers they meet. I realised that drawings could be used to circumvent some of the problems inherent in regular interviews. During the interviews the academics brought up several emotional experiences from their particular department. The group process was very dynamic because the academics could recognise each others' perceptions and contribute with their own experiences.

4.3 The double

Where the two outlined approaches provide the informants with plenty of time for self-reflection before the interview, 'the double' is a role play between the researcher and the informant and can only with some difficulty be performed as a group session. The approach is inspired by Silvia Gherardi, who uses the approach to generate data about a blue-collar community in the assembly shop of a company that produces batteries (Gherardi, 1995, p.6). In the 'interview with the double', I first asked the informant to describe his next work day in detail, so I could do the exact same tasks the following morning so well that none of the colleagues would notice the switch. A description could, for instance, start with what time the informant go to work, who he greets, the morning ritual with coffee and hanging the jacket at that particular knob and so on. Secondly, I asked the informant to describe how I should behave in that particular culture as if I should double for him at work tomorrow. Again, the description should be so detailed that no one discovers the switch (Gherardi, 1995: 11). Before starting each role-play, I made sure that the informant would understand what to do by giving an example from my own work-day the following morning, because I wanted them to tell me these things with as little interference from my side as possible.

I used the approach in eight interviews with academics, and generated data that has given me detailed knowledge about the work day of an academic in retail banking. Regardless of bank, there are hardly any differences in the academics' job descriptions. But when I asked them to describe how to behave in the bank, I found varieties and lots of nuances which, I would not have found in a traditional interview. The particular advantage of the approach is the way it makes the informants talk about their relations, and sometimes lack of relations, in the bank. In the words of one of the academics:

"… as mentioned before, my mentor is never around, and therefore you should ask Maria instead, because she is always so kind to help me even though it is not her job – she has also often asked me to join one of her meetings with her clients, so I can see what it entails before I get my own clients. She has been to Germany and knows very, very much about everything – especially about currency and stuff like that. It is also Maria and John I always go to lunch with…"

A deeper understanding of how the academics perceive the complex relations in the department is important in order to understand how easy or difficult it is to be integrated and learn the symbolic, embodied and encultured knowledge in the bank.

I found that the academics' perception of how well integrated they were could be anything between feeling fully integrated to feeling highly misplaced in the job because the experienced bank clerks dressed differently, talked about inane things such as cars, children and recent house purchases at lunch. But every time an academic did not feel integrated, they found it difficult to find answers to their questions, for instance because they felt that their mentor did not care about them because he had been forced to take the mentoring job in order to develop his career opportunities. I also found that the academics felt that some of their colleagues thought of them as a threat because they have a longer educational background than the rest of the department, and therefore they would often be 'kindly' ridiculed when they asked questions considered basic for an experienced bank clerk. This sometimes meant that the academic chose to try to figure it out one more time by himself instead of asking a colleague, which slows down a dynamic learning process.

"I have learned the hard way to ask the question immediately to one of my colleagues because, in the first couple of months of my trainee period I often tried for way too long to solve the assignment myself without asking for help – even though they did not expect me to be able to solve it. So I guess there where some mutual misunderstanding of what I could and could not do."

I have used the interview with 'the double' to learn more about the complex relations the academics enter in their department, and to understand the learning environment for a newcomer. Like the two other approaches the interview with the double is an easy way to learn about emotions, relations and specific work processes, and better than the semi-structured interview in some ways.

5 THE FUSION OF APPROACHES MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

In some cases it could be sufficient to use one of the approaches, but in my research I would argue that it is necessary to use all three approaches because each has its advantages.

The primary advantage in using organisational photography is the informants' high degree of self reflection where the informant comes up with the topics for the research process. My aim with this approach is that it is a good way to initiate the data-generating process because it expands rather than limit the interview, unlike the semi-structured interview, where the researcher defines the themes. Therefore it is a useful approach when you do not know the field of research very well before the in-depth analysis. Another advantage is that you can discover many topics because the informants shoot more than one picture, but the consequence is that you do not have time during the interview to go into detail with all the topics. Another advantage is that the interview is based on photos as artifacts created by the informants, which have turned out to be an easier way to learn about emotional topics than the semi-structured interview where there are so many facades.

The interview with 'the double' comprises a small degree of self-reflection compared to the two other approaches, but it is an excellent way to obtain a detailed description about the actual work, in the organisation, because the informant suddenly explains details that would have seemed irrelevant in the semi-structured interview. It is also an excellent way to learn about the complex relations the informant is weaved into, and since the interview is based on a role-play manual written by the informants, the complex relations give the researcher an important impression of the learning environment for a newcomer in the various departments.

The drawing approach includes a high degree of self-reflection; the informants have an opportunity to reflect on their own before sharing their thoughts with others, but group processes are also very dynamic because of the collaboration in the group. The drawing approach supplements the organisational photography very well because it is a good approach to learn about one particular emotional situation, unlike the organisational photography that involve lots of different situations. The interview is based on drawings as an artifact created by the informants, and therefore it is an easy way to learn more about the informants' emotional situation. The fusion of the three approaches is illustrated in figure 5. The first step is to identify topics of personal interest through organisational photography, the second step is a drawing session for further investigation of one of the topics, and the third step is to conduct an interview with 'the double' in order to learn about the actual work and the complex relations between academics and bank clerks.

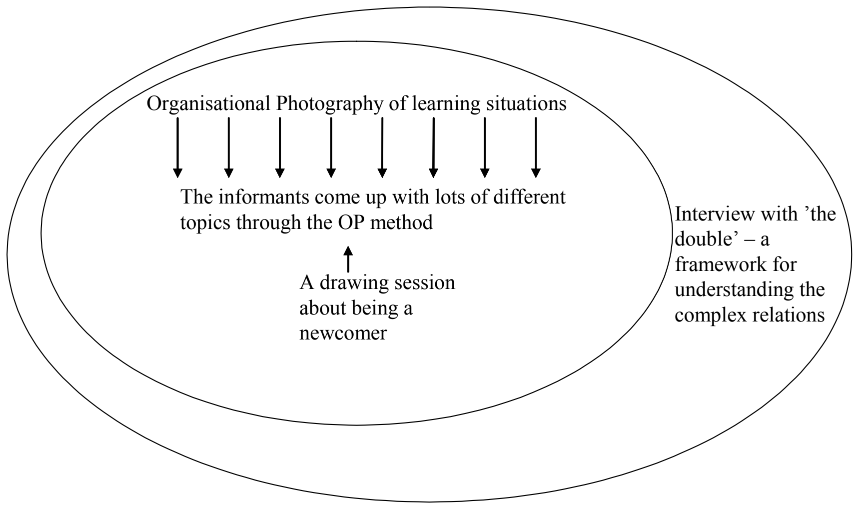

Figure 5: The fusion of the three aesthetic approaches

I have used organisational photography to learn about the issues in the field that were interesting according to the academics themselves, and I used interviews with 'the double' to learn about their actual work and their complex relations and thereby their ability to learn in the given environment. Finally, I used drawings to analyse how the academics experienced the emotional situation being a newcomer in their department. By combining the three approaches, I can let the informants decide what issues merit further analysis and I learn about highly emotional situations and complex relations.

6 LIMITATIONS IN THE USE OF AESTHETIC APPROACHES

Some of my informants were skeptical in the beginning when I asked them to take pictures in the workplace. Some were also skeptical when I asked them to draw an emotional situation, and argued that they never could draw, but none of them refused completely. I may just have been lucky, because it would definitely be a limitation in the use of the three approaches if the informants protest against joining the aesthetic event.

One reason why I use the three approaches is that each of them involves an artifact that is useful for an analysis of their narrative about emotional and relational situations. Therefore I see an important limitation in how far you ethically can allow the interview to develop. Some informants get carried away in the interview, and some are so happy that the researcher is interested in their emotional state and therefore they are in danger of telling too much to a stranger. It is a subjective assessment when data is too sensitive and like any other subjective assessment it can be questioned, but it is a question that must be left unanswered. Some researchers would say that this information could be valuable, but since I am not a psychotherapist, it is not my purpose to learn too much about informants' personal emotions.

The illustration of the interview guide shows my two objectives with my data generation: I wanted to investigate how the academics describe the learning environment, and I wanted to investigate how the academics could influence the community of practice. I have shown how each of the three aesthetic approaches contributes to the first objective, but also that the aesthetic approaches have their limitations in relation to the second objective. The aesthetic approaches have limitations like any other interview, because it is difficult for the informants to talk about their embodied and encultured knowledge from past experiences because it is tacit knowledge they take for granted. Though I believe it is possible for the informant to rediscover some of the tacit knowledge in an interview, I am certain of that they will never be able to explain most of their embodied and encultured knowledge in words. Therefore I have chosen to supplement the three aesthetic approaches with observations of a newcomer during his/ her trainee period. I will start this study in the autumn 2007.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have found that a fusion of organisational photography, drawings and interviews with 'the double' comprises an excellent research framework that addresses several of the limitations of the traditional semi-structured interview. Organisational photography is a good way to enter an unfamiliar setting, because it provides the informants with time to reflect about which issues that are interesting. In the traditional semi-structured interview, the researcher is a 'foreigner' to the field that invents the topics for the interview, which can limit the answers. The interview with 'the double' is a good way to learn more about the informant's work day and their particular relational situation. And finally, the drawing approach is a good way to learn more about the informants' emotional situation in the induction process when he or she was learning not just the explicit knowledge, but also the tacit embodied and encultured knowledge at their new workplace. The aesthetic approaches showed how the creative process tears down the informants' reluctance to talk freely about their emotional situation as a newcomer in a culturally homogeneous group of bank clerks. Therefore the traditional semi-structured interview can not stand alone when we generate complex and emotional data, and the fusion of approaches creates a more comprehensive and coherent picture of the particular emotional situation.

However there are also limitations to the aesthetic approaches. The informants may refuse to participate, and there is an ethical dimension the researcher has to be aware of. Finally there are certain subjects where neither the traditional semi-structured interview nor aesthetic approaches can provide an answer. In my research I wanted to learn how the academics influence the community of practice, and not just through the explicit spoken language, but also through the tacit embodied and encultural knowledge. I realised that I had to supplement the aesthetic approaches with observations, and I need to make further research in the use of these approaches in order to understand how the use of these approaches influences the informant.

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