Doing research after the new General Data Protection Regulation. How does it affect new research project?

24. School Development

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Abstract

In May 2018, a new General Data Protection Regulation (EU Commision, 2018) were passed within the European Union and the European Economic Area. The new rules on data protection mean that people have more control over their personal data and requires those gathering data to be clear about why and how personal data is to be gathered stored and used. Personal data means any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified.

The Nordic Centre of Excellence «Quality in Nordic Teaching» (QUINT) is a research project funded by Nordforsk (2018-2023) that will focus on teaching quality in Nordic classrooms (Denmark, Sweden Norway, Finland and Iceland) asking questions like: *In what way does teaching make a difference to student learning and engagement across and within school subjects, with and without digital-rich support, in mono- and multi-cultural contexts across the Nordic countries? How can classroom videos be effective tools for teacher training? Does the use of video-technology and other digital systems generate potential for new forms of collaborative research between researchers and practitioners?* (see: https://www.nordforsk.org/no/programmer-og-prosjekter/prosjekter/nordic-centre-of-excellence-quality-in-nordic-teaching-quint)

Data collection will be by large and small scale video-studies of classrooms in the Nordic countries at grades 5-7/8-10. Video-technology can provide researchers with rich and comparative data but can also be a threat to the protection of the person.

In this symposium, we will introduce briefly the QUINT project (1), aims and data collection, we will then introduce the experience from research projects (2), (3), that form the backbone of QUINT where video data have already been collected and then describe the experience from groups within the project (4) that have collected data after the new General Data Protection Regulation. By introducing projects that have already collected and analysed video data from Nordic classroom prior and after the new regulations we aim to promote discussion on research with children and young people and possible restrictions due to new personal data protection.

References


1.Nordic Centre of Excellence: Quality in Nordic Teaching (QUINT)
The Nordic Centre of Excellence «Quality in Nordic Teaching» (QUINT) will focus on teaching quality in Nordic classrooms asking questions like: In what way does teaching make a difference to student learning and engagement across and within school subjects, with and without digital-rich support, in mono- and multi-cultural contexts across the Nordic countries? How can classroom videos be effective tools for teacher training? Does the use of video-technology and other digital systems generate potential for new forms of collaborative research between researchers and practitioners?

Often Nordic welfare states and their educational systems are described as homogeneous, but studies indicate that there are significant differences when researchers observe the practices of teachers and interactions in classrooms. There is a need for systematic and comparative research efforts to go deeper and broader into these patterns that also take into account the changing landscape of Nordic schools, such as the digitalization of learning processes and a stronger multicultural profile.

QUINT addresses these issues by bringing together excellent researchers from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. By doing large and small scale video-studies of classrooms at grades 5-7/8-10 and by logging on-line interactions they will be in a position to produce new insights into what characterizes teaching quality in Nordic classrooms. Video-technology provides researchers with rich data that they can analyze together and also do one or several new analyses of the empirical material. Thus this approach is excellent for comparative and longitudinal research. However, when collecting large amount of video data there is a need for a research infrastructure that organizes this material in a safe, searchable and accessible format.

Video-recordings are also proven to be effective learning resources for teachers professional learning, and QUINT will support several research projects that go deeper into how video data enhance the teaching quality of pre- and in-service teachers. An overarching theme for the Centre is the use of video in new forms of collaborative research that enable productive and concrete discussions about improvements in teaching practices. The QUINT partnership achieves its objectives by working together with highly reputed international scholars (see: https://www.nordforsk.org/en/programmes-and-projects/projects/nordic-centre-of-excellence-quality-on-nordic-teaching-quint)

2. The LISA project. Ethical by design: secure, accessible and shareable video data

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Abstract
Advancement in data gathering techniques together with new regulations of privacy, storage and access to data (EUGDPR) put new demands on researchers regarding policies and routines for how to collect, store, share, access, analyze, and present data. We present on two ongoing large scale classroom video studies ("Linking Instruction and Student Achievement (LISA)) analyzing teaching quality in respectively Norwegian and Swedish secondary classrooms. We report on what we describe as “ethical by design” – how new technologies and regulations of ethics and privacy set new standards for the whole research process when collecting classroom video data.
Theoretical framework

For analyzing teaching quality across these Nordic classrooms – we used the PLATO framework (Grossman, 2015) focusing on the following aspects of teaching quality: Instructional scaffolding, Intellectual challenge, Representation of content, and Classroom environment. These four dimensions are divided into 12 sub-elements. Besides using a common analytical framework – both studies used the similar procedures for collecting data (sampling; consent forms; recording techniques), storage – and data management procedures, how to present the data (how to select video clips etc.) thus methodological procedures here is also a part of theories of privacy and ethics.

Methodological design

To be able to compare and contrast data across the two settings we developed a shared set of principles for collecting data (camera – set up and design, 4 consecutives lessons from each classroom/subject area, participating not mandatory, solution for those not willing to participate, observer role etc.), analyzing the data (a shared observation instrument (e.g PLATO), training/scoring facilities, continuous calibrating procedures), and representing the data (how to select video clips, level of contextualization and/or magnification). Altogether we have videotaped 126 classrooms, 98 in Norway and 28 (so far) in Sweden.

After video-recording all data were encrypted and stored on secure servers at University of Oslo/Karlstad only accessible for those listed in the project group. Coding and scoring of the data followed the same procedures ensuring that each coder was reliable.

Expected conclusions/findings

Classroom video data are intrusive and person sensitive by design; therefor researcher needs to plan for this systematically throughout the whole research process. Our findings suggest this is especially critical for:

- Standardization of procedures for sampling and data collection
- Camera set up/ recording solutions
- Solution s for those not willing to participate – technical solutions when blurring
- Analyzing the data
- Representing data

Relevance to Nordic educational research

Comparative classroom design and data are especially relevant for the Nordic context due to our shared tradition of Nordic schooling. To develop shared standards for video classroom design that meet the GDPR requirements and still makes it possible to systemically investigate Nordic classroom practices is therefore urgent to develop.

References


3. Student participation in Connected Classrooms – ethical considerations from video ethnographic research

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Abstract
Due to ongoing digitalization of Nordic education, there is a strong need for research about how digital technology in classrooms. The fact that classrooms today are becoming connected through mobile devices, changes them as spaces for learning and social interaction. This development also calls for new research methods that are able to capture and analyze the role of digital devices in classroom interaction, not least from a student perspective. In this presentation we highlight some ethical aspects of video research in connected classrooms, drawing on experiences from two large video ethnographic studies in Finland (Textmöten) and Sweden (Uppkopplade klassrum).

Theoretical framework
Theoretically the two projects depart from socio cultural understandings of learning and literacy (Barton, 2007), where teacher and student participation in classroom interaction are mainly investigated from a multimodal perspectives on social interaction (Goodwin, 2000).

Methodological design
To be able to compile and compare data between the two countries, a shared design has been developed where we use wi-fi technique and video. A total of 15 focus students in the upper secondary school have been followed, resulting in a total of 160 hours of recorded lessons. The combination of screen recordings and traditional video ethnographic material makes possible the detailed analysis of how face-to-face and mobile mediated interaction intertwine in the context of the classroom. Students had control over the application during recording and it was possible for them to turn off the mirroring whenever they wished to, something they did only rarely. After the data collection the screen recordings were compiled with two simultaneous video recordings from the classroom, one focusing on the students’ desk and surrounding peers and one focusing on the students’ laptop screen and/or paper-based resources in literacy practices.

Expected conclusions/findings
Classroom video studies of connected social interaction demands research methods that generates data that are personal and sometimes sensitive. This requires an ethically conscious stance that goes beyond processes of informed consent, since the methods come so close to the personal and corporal sphere of the research persons which could be experienced as intrusive (c.f. Aarsand & Forsberg, 2009). Through the focus students’ use of social media, also other students have become involved in the research, which raises new ethical challenges. Ethical considerations, involving continuous negotiation and dialogue between researchers and participants, have therefore been an integrated part of the process before, during and after the data collection.

Relevance to Nordic educational research
In the field of video research, there have previously been notable differences in terms of ethical regulations between at least some of the Nordic countries. It is essential to follow the situation after the introduction of GDPR.
References


4. The Challenge of collecting video data in thin populated area

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Abstract

Research topic/aim

As part of the QUINT project the data collection in Iceland aims at answering the projects’ main questions such as: In what way does teaching make a difference to student learning and engagement across and within school subjects, with and without digital-rich support, in mono- and multi-cultural contexts.

Theoretical framework

Recent reviews highlight that teaching quality is more important for students’ learning than several other factors, including student socio-economic background, class size, classroom climate, and teacher’s years of experience and formal training (Hanushek, 2014). Although scholars from very different disciplinary traditions agree that teaching quality matters, there is little consensus about the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). That also account for Iceland, where teaching methods has proven to rather homogeneous, not providing students with many opportunities to affect their own learning process (Gerdur G. Óskarsdóttir, 2014). It has become the accepted view that quality in teaching ‘...is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that is best studied through a variety of overlapping complementary strategies’ (Croninger et al., 2012, p. 3).

Methodological design

The QUINT centre host several comparative projects all rest on the same database, video-recordings in classrooms in the Nordic countries. Ten compulsory schools in Iceland will be chosen purposefully in terms of variety in number of students, type of schools, results on national tests and location in a city or in the country side. Nine lessons in grade eight will be video recorded in each school, three consecutive lessons in Math, three in Icelandic and three in Social science. Total of 90 lessons. Two cameras will be based in the classroom, one extra microphone in the middle and the teachers will have a microphone as well. This requires that at least two members of the team are present in the school at a time for one week.

Expected conclusions/findings
Preparation work and procedures for selecting schools and participants is ongoing at the writing of the proposal as well as application to The Icelandic Data Protection Authority. The conclusion will be discussed as well as the challenge to convince schools and participants to be part of a project where their appearance will be used as an exemplary model.

**Relevance to Nordic educational research**

The project contributes to an ethical discussion where video data are used to present examples to others. Video data put specific constraints to issues of privacy and anonymization especially when it relates to thinly populated schools in sparsely populated areas.

**References**

