

WS2 EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF CLASSROOM DATA

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One of the issues that the presenters are working on at the moment is the degree to which researcher's own life experience influences the way in which they see and then interpret their research data. How can researchers work on increasing their sensitivity to the different possibilities that may be inherent in the data at their disposal?

One possibility is to try to access the multiple life experiences, which exist within every group through an activity, which encourages participants to share their unique interpretations of specific situations. With this in mind, participants in this working session will be given data in transcript and/or videotape form of mathematics classroom interactions. Participants will be asked to play the role of the actors in the incident in a way, which tries to bring out their understanding of the feelings, emotions and intentions that are present. Once a variety of different interpretations have been tabled through the role-play, participants will return to the data and look to see if they can find any evidence which privileges one particular interpretation above the others. We will also explore the consequences of working with a set of parallel interpretations rather than attempt to arrive at a 'true' interpretation. Finally, we will use the variety of interpretations in an attempt to draw up a menu of possible appropriate interventions for the classroom incident under consideration.