

## Students as data producers and classrooms as sites of data production

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The actions and processes of ‘datafication’, enabled by the conditions of intensifying performative accountability and measurement in ‘data obsessed’ schools (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2018, p.1) are having critical impacts on assessment and learning practices in classrooms. While current modes of discourse in policy and research often contextualise student academic performance data as produced by teachers, schools or systems, I argue that this is a misrepresentation of what is in plain sight - that it is in fact the students who are the producers of this data. Drawing upon Kemmis et al.’s (2014) concept of practice architectures, this chapter teases apart the specific *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* that made up students’ situated practices. Through a theoretically informed ethno-case study of these practices (Parker-Jenkins, 2018), I utilise the theory of practice architectures to map, make visible and analyse the practices in one primary and one secondary public school in Queensland, Australia. To do this, I present findings from 19 focus group discussions with 52 students (Year 3 through to Year 9), interviews with 27 teachers and observations in classrooms, including a range of artefacts and materials collected within them.

Emerging findings reveal that in a material-economic sense, data is produced in the classroom and during the classroom learning time of the students. In cultural-discursive terms, it demands the understanding and the processing of new discursive texts, codes and ways of thinking and talking as students come to make sense of themselves as learners. In socio-political terms, it ensues the processes of comparison, ranking, and the pressure to perform and position themselves as learners among their peers. Thus, the data are not from nowhere (D’Ignazio & Klein, 2020). They are from the students. Under such conditions, data *are* the students.

Throughout this presentation, I make an intentional move away from the ‘abstract’, taking a view of practices *in practice* to reveal what had been normalised – in this case, that the classroom was the site of data production and students the producers. The implications of this on their daily practices in classrooms is a point to consider gravely and return to with assurances and authentic amendments (Hardy, 2021). The alternative is too risky warns Couldry (2017) as ‘unwitting data producers’ are ‘not alive, at least not in the sense we have always known human beings to be alive’; rather, they inhabit ‘dead souls’ (p. 237).

## References

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