



CAPTURING SENSORY AND MATERIAL ENCOUNTERS

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Overview

- Background and context for the study
- Challenges of interpretation and representation
- Getting at embodied knowledge using 'full-bodied' approaches

Sensitising activity 1.

Multi-sensory fieldnotes:

- ⦿ Put yourself in the shoes of a sensory ethnographer – spend a moment to absorb the atmosphere and sensory properties of the room
- ⦿ Write a few lines that seek to capture the multi-sensory experience of the room – as if you were making fieldnotes
- ⦿ How do you translate and organise these different sensory properties on the page?

The Hair and Care project: Background

- ⦿ Appearance management largely ignored in dementia policy and research
- ⦿ In practice, evidence points to efforts to impose/maintain a standard of presentation as an indicator of good care – ‘the lounge standard resident’ (Lee-Treweek, 1997)
- ⦿ Appearance approached as an endpoint or objective of care but achieved through sometimes fraught and coercive bedroom encounters (‘Bedroom abuse’ Lee-Treweek 1994)
- ⦿ Our approach involved re-casting appearance as process rather than as a fixed image or standard
- ⦿ Focus on hairdressing as a distinctive type of body work ‘imported’ into care

Design of the project

Embodied histories and the
'immediacy of the body'
(Kontos 2004, 2005)



Embodied histories: Appearance biographies

Vic – ‘Some people didn’t care what their kids looked like, my mother was just the opposite, and you had to do it, she told me what to do – my shoes had to be cleaned and all that... that was my era’

Judith (his wife) - ... ‘it used to be regarded as a good personality if you had shiny shoes, if you cleaned your shoes’

Lily's 'appearance signature'

Interviewer: *'And going to the hairdresser's regularly has that become a natural part of your life?'*

L: *'Oh yes! Once I had money in my pocket I was every colour under the sun'*

I: *'Really?'*

L: *'They brought one [hair dye] out called Black Tulip and it was like a... it was very dark purple. But one thing I was very adventurous with was my hair. I'd have it permed, then I'd have it cut short, then I'd have it dyed. And I did all sorts with my hair. I wasn't very adventurous in any other way, but with my hair I did mess about, yeah'*

Sensitising activity 2.

Share some insights into your own 'doing of appearance'

1. Are there any practices that you've maintained for years? Perhaps learned from an older generation?
2. Any particularly evocative sensory associations?
3. Do you have any 'appearance signatures'? (i.e. distinctive features to your appearance work that are particularly meaningful to you)

'Immediacy of the body': Using film

We made 3 types of film:

1. Process filming in each salon
2. In-situ interviewing on film
3. 'Observant participation' / sensory apprentice



Interpretations and representations

When we attentively watch another person undertaking an activity that we are seeking to learn about the experience of, we use our own biographical embodied experiences to empathetically imagine what the experience of that other person is. This is not to say that we can imagine the same experience. Yet it does imply a process of non-verbal embodied learning (Pink, 2012, p.43)

Film analysis

- ⦿ Follow the multi-sensory experience of hairdresser's client
- ⦿ Pay attention to the hairdresser's practice – especially her sensory and bodily awareness
- ⦿ Consider the significance of the intercorporeal aspects of the encounter – especially the different uses of touch by the hairdresser and husband
- ⦿ Consider your own embodied response to the excerpt

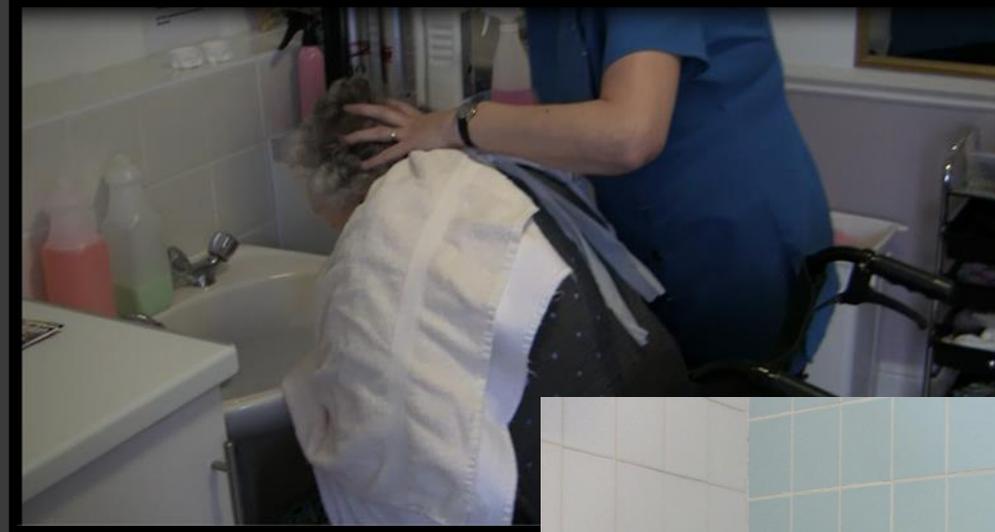
A visit from the mobile hairstylist

Film clip

Sensory Apprentice

‘Ethnographer – apprentice learning to know as others know through embodied practice’ ‘learning through apprenticeship requires emplaced engagement’ (Pink 2009, p69-72)

The Risky Business of a Hair Wash



Sensory apprentice – hair wash

Film clip

My hair wash in a care based salon.

After our discussion in front of the mirror we moved to the sink. The hairdresser asked me if I was ok to face forward. I realised that in salons today they are usually back washes, so this was different for me. She put a towel around me and I leant over the sink. There was lots of water rushing; it took a few moments for the temperature to become warm enough. The water rushed over me and I felt very wet, it was also very dark as I faced into the sink and couldn't open my eyes. I held the towel around my face. The shampoo massage was lovely, but I was very aware of all the water. The water was warm now, and the smells of the shampoo and conditioner filled my nose. As the hairdresser firmly lifted me up from the sink water dripped down my face. The light changed as I came up from the dark depths of the sink. What would this experience be like if I were a person with dementia and without my glasses and hearing aid?



Fringe talk

- Film clip



Discussion questions

- ⦿ Can we use this method to bring us closer to someone else's sensory and embodied experience?
- ⦿ What are the pros and cons?
- ⦿ Have you used this method? – what were your experiences? / Would you use this method and how could it help you in your research?