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The methodological illumination of a blind spot : information and communication technology and international research team dynamics in a higher education research program / David M. Hoffman ...

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Abstract

This self-ethnography complements the other articles in this special issue by spotlighting a set of key challenges facing international research teams. The study is focused on the relationship between information and communication technology (ICT)-based collaboration and research team dynamics. Our diverse team, drawn from researchers in five countries and three projects, argues that an ironic casualty of the powerful, global phenomena we study, is a lack of insight into what happens to generic research team dynamics, when groups are "stretched" in terms of geographical distance, generations, cultural beliefs, values and norms, as well as disciplinary/specialist traditions. Good intentions are not sufficient to cope with these challenges. This is because of the emerging complexity inherent in many types of international, interdisciplinary fields of study and the complexity of the career trajectories needed to make these studies a reality. Our study underlines that there are no beliefs, values, norms and practices linked to research team dynamics, that hold across the current territory, generations, disciplines, cultures, organizations and individuals leading and conducting comparative studies?and

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even less reflection on the implications of this fact. Compounding this lack of awareness is a less-than-perfect understanding of the way in which ICT-based collaboration bears on research team dynamics. We assert that a holistic, critical, long-term approach to emerging insights into the global division of academic labor, serves our field better than folk psychology or the methodological parochialism that sustains convention at the expense of creativity. Careful consideration of emergent processes, relationships and linkages that explain how short-term cooperation?within projects?begins to make sense?over careers?illuminates key focal points, which, in turn qualitatively illuminates the way forward concerning conceptualization and problematization of our practice; and novel methodological routes available for those interested in attaining better outcomes, over the long term. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Hoffman, David M., E-Mail: hoffman@ktl.jyu.fi