"Both R&D and Retail": Regional Organizational Networks as Infrastructures for Digital Learning Innovation

Context of Investigation: Hive NYC Learning Network

“MediA Hive NYC Learning Network is a city-wide laboratory where educators, technologists and members design innovative, connected educational experiences for youth. Together, these institutions create an ecosystem of opportunities for young people to explore their interests and develop key 21st-century skills.” - HiveNYC.org, March 2014

“The Hive representing busy bees buzzing, probably more organizations than a dozen, coming together into a swarm, the minds, energies, and passions, so we can inhabit and move forward, rather than remain at all the different festivals, sections, sectors, ways that we perfect our learning, living, loving, community experience.” - Hive member, March 2013

Findings: The Hive Pop-Up: Participation Structures Mediating Innovation Practices

Grounded Theoretical Framework: Developing and Sensitizing Innovation Constructs Inductively and deductively Based on March’s notion of Exploration

Research Questions

What are some of the distinct exploratory innovation practices that educators in out of school educational organizations engage in?

What are some of the ways that the policy and participation structures associated with a regional organizational network mediate these educators’ exploratory innovation practices?

What are some of the ways that social ties associated with a regional organizational network mediate these educators’ exploratory innovation practices?

What are some ways that the field affiliation structures mediate these educators’ exploratory innovation practices?

The Big Question

How does participation in a regional organizational network mediate the exploratory innovation practices of educators within out of school educational organizations?

Methodology

This study engaged ethnographic fieldwork, observation, document analysis, structured and informal interviews in order to describe distinctive exploratory innovation practices that educators engage in and explain the ways such practices are mediated by policies and participation structures, social ties amongst actors, and contrasting field affiliations. To date the study has:

- Engaged in 14 months of fieldwork between March of 2012 and March 2014
- Conducted 82 semi-structured interviews with educators and network stakeholders
- Logged over 350 hours of direct observation
- Generated 44 field notes as part of ongoing sequence making
- Written 7 synthetic analytic memos aimed at theoretical sensitization

The study aims to fill a gap in knowledge regarding how educators engage in exploratory innovation practices, and ways that broader network ties, policies and dynamics mediate this activity.

References


