RECENT DISSERTATIONS

MARIANNE LØKEN, 2017

Write your choice! Rewriting stories about @typical educational choices

The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, University of Oslo, Norway

Summary

This thesis focuses on the phenomenon of atypical educational choices, and builds on a qualitative study. The informants are young women who have chosen STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), as their area of study, in a field where women are underrepresented. Seventeen young women participated in this study, and their personal stories were collected between 2009 and 2012. The overarching objective of the thesis has been to gain a better understanding of women's atypical educational choices. The study includes narrative analyses of empirical material, as well as theory development inspired by feminist and posthumanist perspectives. In order to gain insight into the phenomenon of atypical educational choices, the following questions were posed: 1) *How can empirical analyses of young women's personal stories of choices provide greater knowledge of atypical educational choices?* and 2) *How can feminist and posthumanist theoretical approaches to empirical analyses facilitate a rereading of these stories about educational choices?* These questions generated research questions, which are examined in each of thesis' three articles. Altogether, these articles offer ideas on how research on educational choices, as well as participation in STEM may be informed by feminist scientific theory, and can be understood from sociocultural and sociomaterial perspectives. It is in light of these interdisciplinary, theoretical approaches that the thesis contributes to the research field of science education.

Article I examines how a framework inspired by feminist scientific theory may facilitate more nuanced gender stereotypical conceptions and attitudes under recruitment for STEM. This article provides an understanding of how more recent research on recruitment to STEM can facilitate policymaking, how these measures can be utilised in the discourse on scientific theory, and how a unilateral focus on gender differences may cause the research field to miss nuances that are necessary to ensure greater diversity in STEM.

Article II examines how personal stories about atypical educational choices may challenge gender stereotypical conceptions of educational choices. This article incorporates the insight from Article I, and further develops this insight, focusing on how women's stories of educational choices may challenge gender stereotypes of women and STEM.

Article III (in review) examines how using a sociomaterial perspective in the analyses of stories about educational choices can facilitate an understanding of how material experiences are involved in the choice of technology studies. The purpose of this article is to examine how posthumanist perspectives can facilitate a new understanding of young women's choices of, and participation in STEM.

Language: Norwegian, two articles in English

ISSN: 1501-7710

Contact: loken.marianne@gmail.com