

Zooming in - Zooming out - using iPad video diaries in ethnographic educational research

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Abstract. This paper presents the use of video diaries in ethnographic educational research among nursing students in Denmark. It is based on the researcher's experiences from an ongoing ethnographic study focusing on the student perspective of being enrolled in a class following an experimental educational model. The paper presents video diaries as a way of generating qualitative data, reflects on the ethical strategies and dilemmas of using video diaries and illuminates the possibilities of allowing students to state their voices when and where they choose.

Keywords. Video diaries, educational ethnography, ethical reflexivity, nursing education, student perspective.

1. Introduction

Educational ethnography is about mapping out the field giving voice to those involved in learning and teaching in diverse learning spaces and time (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Borgnakke 1996ab; Borgnakke 2010). Ethnography is also about telling social stories (Murthy 2008). This paper will present and discuss the use of video diaries as one of multiple methods to generate data in an ongoing ethnographic study on nursing students' experiences with being students in a profession-oriented context characterized by shifts between classroom and clinical settings. In addition, the paper will argue that video diaries can capture upfront personal stories of the educational trajectory that are not obtainable in the formal context of a classroom or of clinical settings. Consequently, video diaries add on to the account of data in the study, by integrating stories that are told or observed neither in a classroom nor in clinical settings, stories which - from a student perspective - is of great importance to the educational journey.

This paper reflects the use of video diaries as integrated in ongoing educational ethnographic studies of a class following an experimental educational model. The class was enrolled in 2009 at *The School of Nursing in Aarhus* at the *Faculty of Health, VIA University College* in Denmark. The purpose was to educate more nurses – with the secondary intention of gaining knowledge about other possible ways to perform the education. The class, named the E-class, followed what in the field was called ‘an

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experimental educational model based on experienced-based learning' (Nielsen et al. 2011). Based on my analysis of the course material and the evaluations from the internal investigators⁴⁴, I would argue that the educational model as an experiment was primarily based on two principles: (1) studies in clinical settings always preceded classroom teaching ("practice-before-theory") and (2) increased time spent in fora/meetings where students, clinical instructors as well as lecturers from the school were present ("the recurrent pedagogical concept"). The class graduated in January 2013.

2. Mixing classic fieldwork and the use of video diaries

As part of an ongoing PhD project, I set out to perform ethnographic studies among the students enrolled in the E-class. In doing so, field studies were conducted over a period of 22 months, beginning in September 2011 and ending in May 2013. The overall aim was to investigate how the experimental educational model worked from a student perspective and its impact on student learning processes and outcome. The design uses classic long-term fieldwork as described by Borgnakke (1996ab; 2013b) - mixed with video diaries and digital letters⁴⁵. As a whole, using blended methodology would reflect the field and give voice to the students in different learning contexts, e.g., classroom, clinical practice, campus and learning spaces created by each student in their own contexts. In this sense, the ethnographic framework is 'a mix of methods and voices and will be blended to the same degree as the field of practice' (Borgnakke 2013a). The decision to mix classic fieldwork and video diaries was made in expectation that the latter would add data not otherwise obtainable to the study by serving as a media which follows the student, not the researcher. Or in other words: fieldwork was no longer restricted by the time and space in which the researcher naturally could observe and interview the student, but also presented the student with a chance to define what to disclose to the researcher – and when and where to do it.

Heath et al (2009) states that in general visual methods have the potential to give young people more control over the data generation process - and a chance to express themselves in media with which they feel comfortable. Heath et al have even coined the phrase 'age-appropriate methods'. No doubt that the current generation of nursing students are used to present themselves in social media, as they have been brought up with FaceBook, Twitter, reality TV and programmes like X-Factor and Big Brother (Duggan and Brenner 2013; Noyes 2004; Dahl and Kjær Nielsen 2009). Thus, the idea of making public their personal statements, photos or videos is not unknown as a form of communication for this generation. So with the intention of giving nursing students a voice of their own in this study, video diaries were included, expecting that this would give the participants a unique opportunity to represent themselves in time and space by 'self-filming' (Murray 2009) in a media well-suited and well-known for the nursing students.

The following part of this paper will zoom in on and reflect upon the use of video diaries, the potentials and challenges as well as ethical dilemmas of using video diaries.

⁴⁴ The full course material and evaluations (in Danish) for each year can be found on: <http://www.viauc.dk/E-klasse>

⁴⁵ The Digital Letters is a part of the PhD Project, and a co-joint project by Røn Noer & Borgnakke, 2013, but will not be further elaborated in this paper.

3. Using video diaries researching student life

In the spring of 2012, four of the then 27⁴⁶ E-class students were invited to participate in the study as key informants, tasked with the production of video diaries. The video diaries are defined as 'series of video recordings (in this case on iPads) made by the informants over an extended period of time and used for collecting data on their lives through this specific period of time'. All four key informants were female students. They were chosen, not because of their gender, age or grades, but because as a group they represented four different clinical placements and because of their storytelling skills. In this sense, the sampling of key informants was based on 'observer-identified categories' and was linked closely to the strategy for data collection (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p.37-38). The number of key informants reflects how many students the researcher was able to observe in the clinical settings during the time left until graduation. Prior to the start of the video diaries production, the researcher met with the four students to introduce them to the concept of making video diaries. They were given an iPad2 and very short instructions in recording and uploading videos to an account shared between each student and the researcher. Time was allocated to get familiar with the iPad and practice recording a diary and sharing the videos. iPads were chosen instead of a handheld camera because they are easy to use and have Apps and features which make both recording and sharing the videos easy.

Three different modes of video diaries were used (unstructured, co-directed and theme-based). The initial videos were unstructured in the sense that participants could freely select location, style and wording of the video. Only the timespan for the date of recording was chosen by the researcher and agreed upon in advance. Co-directed videos were made when during the study some of the key informants travelled worldwide as part of their education, in areas where it could have been dangerous to flash the iPad. The participants and the researcher met in advance and made a joint decision not to cover this part of the education with continuous video diaries. Instead, we decided that they would make individual video diaries if possible at their individual placements, and in addition, they agreed to make a total of three videos prior to and after their studies outside campus. The group formulated the questions to guide these videos, and questions were later sent by email to the participants. This means that the video diaries were co-directed by the group as a whole. Finally the study used what is termed 'theme-based video diaries'. These diaries all have a theme, e.g. *Important relations and interactions during my nursing education*. The themes were defined by the researcher and argued to be relevant to the researcher's observations and interviews in the field. As such, the theme-based videos were a result of the mixed methodology combining classic fieldwork and video diaries. In all three types of video diaries the key informants were not probed or directed by the researcher. The length of the story told defined the length of the video diary. Since the time span of the video diaries covers the students' last 12 months before graduation and their first months as graduates, the video diaries cover life both as a student and a nurse, in school and at work, and the stories told by the individual in these settings.

As the key informants began making their video diaries, three main things became evident:

First of all, the students were really comfortable with the process of making video diaries in the sense that the videos they produced showed their home environment,

⁴⁶ 36 students started in September 2009, 22 graduated in January 2013, 1 few months later.

relaxed in PJs, sometimes crying, sometimes with their roommates, on their way to a party or looking tired after a long day at work. Almost none of the videos give an impression of being instructed and/or rehearsed. Only a few times students commented on the way they saw themselves in the videos. An example of a comment could be the student that sent a very short follow-up video, just commenting on her look, saying: *“My breast does NOT look like that in real life”* (VD-S3, March, 2012).

Secondly, they began to use the iPad to make spontaneous video diaries - often starting with a phrase like: *“Hey V, I simply have to tell you this.....”*, and videos revealing their vulnerability and need to talk about their experiences. The video diary became a partner they could confide in. Barnes, Taylor-Brown & Weiner describes how in a project with HIV-positive mothers videotapes turned out to be an empowering medium, offering the mothers an opportunity to reproduce and understand their own world (Barnes, Taylor-Brown, and Weiner 1997). Similarly, the video diaries in this study could be seen as an empowering medium for the students and offer them a chance not only to tell their story, but also to reflect upon their lives as nursing students and nurses as they progress. An example of this is the student who reflects on her learning process like this: *“[...] it irritates me that I always focus on what I can't do or on my failures. I need to be better at focusing on what I do right, during my education, as well as when I become a nurse. It's a learning process, so I'm sure I'll learn how to. I need to believe more in ME.”* (VD-S2, March 2012).

Third, the use of video diaries in combination with observations and interviews reshaped the relationship between the researcher and the students to more than a relationship based on being together in real time and space. This is evident from the ways in which the students address the researcher when making their video diaries and from the researcher's interaction with the students, both online and offline. An example of this is the student that ends her video diary by waving her hand, saying *“Bye, bye V - see you tomorrow”*, and the researcher waves back and says *“See you tomorrow”* - although she knows very well that nobody sees her. Or the researcher reaching out to touch the student's face when she's crying. The point is that the video diaries have a reshaping or maybe even a transformative effect on the relationship between storyteller and researcher when videos are recorded or seen. It is not face-to-face in the same room or online at the same time, but despite the physical separation, there was a great sense of presence. Hammersley (Hammersley 2006) asks a relevant question: *“Does ethnography depend upon the physical presence of the ethnographer in the midst of the people being studied? Or does the assumption that an ethnographer must be physically present involve an outdated conception of what is required for ethnographic work?”* (Hammersley 2006, p. 8). I will argue that the presence of the researcher can take on many forms, not only face-to-face at the same time in the same location. The use of video diaries is an example of this.

4. Up close & personal

As a data-generating method, the iPad video diary is very sensitive to the personal perspective. First and foremost, because each participant chooses what to say and where and when to tell their stories. As stated by Cashmore, Green and Scott (Cashmore et al. 2010), video diaries can capture various emotions, experiences and insights that students 'are feeling at a particular moment in a particular personal and social space'. In this study, it clearly became an invitation into the students' private

physical spaces; in this way, the researcher got a glimpse of their homes, their roommates, their parents' houses etc. In a study, where disposable cameras were handed to the respondents, it is described that this gave access to more private spaces and glimpses of experience that were not shared with the researcher in interviews (Heath and Cleaver 2004). In the present study, the video diaries also gave the researcher access to data not obtainable during classroom or clinical setting observation or told during the interviews. Examples of this could be Laura showing the researcher the view from her room or lying in her running outfit, just arrived home from training, Asta telling and showing that she is at her parents' house studying for the upcoming exam, or Asta, Julie and Laura showing what their workspaces look like during the process of writing their final papers before graduation. Data that all together give a more complete account of the key informants' personalities - as nursing students and as nurses - their learning spaces and learning strategies and how they want to portray themselves in the study. The choice to provide a way for informants to control what to tell and where and when to tell it made them storytellers of their own educational trajectory. Portraits that in some cases take the shape of a mix of a confession and a complaint, clearly not intended to be spoken out loud in formal learning settings, but nonetheless important for the storytellers and their educational trajectory.

In previous studies, it is described how the camera almost takes the place of the researcher giving it the role of a conversation partner (Buchwald, Schantz-Laursen, and Delmar 2009) or that the camera can be seen as a sympathetic, sensitive friend, an attentive ear to turn to for a talk about feelings (Moinian 2006). Similar results are seen in this study as the students often address their communication directly to the researcher, e.g. : *"I'm so embarrassed, Vibeke, that you had to witness this today"* (VD-S2, April 2012), or *"It was really nice to see them - I miss them, because we've been apart for a long time, and as you know, I don't get along that well with fellow students at the ward, so I was beginning to feel alone"* (VD-S1, April, 2012), or in cases where the students state that they are unsure if what they are about to tell is of interest to the researcher, but they will say it anyway. As one student said: *"I just needed to get it out of my system"* (VD-S3, April 2012). It is also evident that many of the videos are displaying the storytellers' feelings about different experiences, i.e. the first time they see a dead patient: *"[...] I felt incredibly humble in the situation. It made an impact on me - and I felt glad that I could contribute to making the situation as dignified as possible [...]"* (VD-S2, April 2012). Or a student displaying her feelings of being in a group where ambitions and time spent on the project differ widely. *"It's Wednesday night, I'm in tears, and I'm frustrated, angry and furious"* (VD-S4, June 2012).

Altogether, the impression is that the storytellers feel comfortable making video diaries on the iPad and sharing them with the researcher. They appear very authentic and trustworthy in the videos, and they portray themselves both as strong individuals and good students, but they also show their insecurity and their doubts about their choice of education and their own performances, both as students and graduated nurses. One storyteller puts it this way: *"Hey Vibeke, just wanted to send you a video [...] I feel sad, I'm tired, and just feel like giving it all up. I didn't expect to have these thoughts at this time. Deep inside, I know that in time I will feel good about it, and appreciate how amazing it (the job) is. [...] But right now, it's tough"* (VD- S4, April 2013). An open invitation to join in their stories - and as a researcher you get a first hand impression first of their experiences of life as a nursing student in the E-Class and later of their experiences of life as new, working nurses.

5. Taking the stories 'front-stage'

Before zooming in on the ethical strategies and reflections on the use of video diaries, let us go 'front-stage' for a moment - close to the stories depicted in the first preliminary analyses of the video diaries. So far, the data set consists of 139 video diaries (from 30 seconds to 24 minutes). TransAna is used to manage the video diaries, to transcribe and to write memos and tags.

The stories told in the video diaries are the stories of four young women on their way to becoming nurses. The stories are very personal, and the researcher is entrusted with data not only on learning strategies and outcome, but also with data on life in general when taking a bachelor degree in nursing. Starting the fieldwork, the researcher expected the experimental educational model and the inherent principles ('practice-before-theory' and 'the recurrent pedagogical concept') to be important themes, and that issues related to 'bridging the gap' would be central. But as the video diaries progressed both in amount and in real time, it was clear that the 'front-stage stories' were stories of formation, important relationships, and assessment and evaluation. Further analyses will enhance understanding of the concepts at stake; only the first preliminary empirical results are presented below.

6. Questions of life and death [...] on an ordinary Tuesday - Stories of formation

A study conducted by Benner et al reported that often formation stories are a major singular theme in the narratives of nursing students, but also woven into many of the other stories told (Benner et al. 2010). Stories of formation are also central in this ongoing study and are told as stories on becoming increasingly independent, on the risk of taking on responsibility too soon, on the fear of making mistakes, on taking control, growing up and at the same time developing oneself into a professional nurse, on the choice of a path in life and on being vulnerable and touched by the patients and their relatives. The stories of formation are good examples on how private life and life as a nursing student become intertwined. An example:

"I've learned something about caring for the patient's relatives when they are suffering. For example when answering the phone - you feel so insecure and vulnerable. You really don't know what will be the right thing to say or do. I don't have that much experience, and there's no time to think of any theory that might help you - you just go and act upon your feelings. In cases like that you learn to push yourself forward. Being in situations where you don't know how the situation will end extends your boundaries because what I end up doing or saying is of great importance to the other person - and that affects you. You are constantly reminded of what's at stake - and by that I mean that an ordinary day in the clinic is filled with emotions, the emotions of the relatives and your own emotions. Questions of life and death become relevant, on an ordinary Tuesday - and as a nursing student you have to be able to handle this - otherwise it's too hard! [...] It sometimes seems crazy when you're at home, to think about what happened at work that day. Sometimes it seems like fiction - it's so different from your own life [...] you get this feeling of separate, parallel worlds" (VD-S1, March, 2012)

7. It's a flashback to elementary school - stories of important relationships and of evaluation

Stories of important relationships were major themes for the key informants. The stories are told as stories of 'the others' and the importance of a person or persons. It is stories of lecturers and clinical instructors that enabled the students to move forward by being role models in the sense that they had a passion for the profession. And it is also stories on the importance of good friends, understanding boyfriends, and supporting parents. But more than anything it is stories of fellow students and why it matters who they are, their ambitions, and how they perform.

"I knew it. Of course it had to be me. I'm just so frustrated, because I actually looked forward to being back at school and doing this assignment. But they punish me by deciding with whom I have to write this paper. It's a flashback to elementary school – back then it was always me and the boys who didn't do shit [...] I just cried when I came home today" (VD-S1, April, 2012).

Stories about school life are mixed both with flashbacks and with evaluation. Student performance is constantly assessed, and the stories told reflect this. They are stories on how to prepare for the next exam, how to handle stress in relation to an evaluation and how to cope with being continuously evaluated. It is the hope for good grades; it is pressure, stress - and the victory and the joy that follow.

"I hope to study tomorrow, but I'm really not very motivated these days. A week ago I felt nervous about the upcoming exam, I felt it in my stomach. But I just find it hard to motivate myself. I'm so exhausted when I arrive home after a day at the hospital, I just can't - and also I really don't know what to read" (VD- S4, April 2012).

They are all stories of being an E-class student, and they capture focal practices in nursing education as it was experienced by students in the class based on an 'experimental educational model'. The stories above were some of the 'front-stage' stories. Further analyses of the video diaries and the data generated from the fieldwork will also go 'back-stage' and enhance the understanding of life as an E-class student by zooming in on important themes depicted and told by the students. One important empirical finding does, however, stand out so far: the educational trajectory is not only formed by curricula, the educational model chosen or educational settings. It is also formed and influenced by fellow students, teachers, instructors, patients and their relatives, family and friends and the history of the individual educational trajectories going back to elementary school. In that sense, it is truly a story of formation and that of becoming a nurse.

8. Ethical strategies and reflections upon the use of video diaries

As in any research, ethical implications should underpin ethnographic research (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Pink 2007), and Rose (Rose 2012) states that for researchers using visual methods, reflexivity is a prerequisite for ethical research. According to Rose, this means "a constant, careful and consistent awareness of what the researcher is doing, why, and with what possible consequences in terms of power relations between researcher and researched." (Rose 2012, p. 341).

My first official meeting with the four students who later became the key informants of 'the story of the E-Class' took place in August 2011. I was assigned to the E-class as a Senior Lecturer and was about to become their lecturer for the

following semester. In my first six months with the E-class, I was their lecturer, but at the same time they knew that I was also about to launch an ethnographic study on the educational model behind the E-class. That is why the key informants were not included until 12 months prior to graduation. At that time I had graded their performances for the last time - and there were no evaluative relationship between the class and me. This was my first ethical strategy doing video diaries. It was important that they knew I did not have the power to grade them depending on their acceptance or non-acceptance to become key informants.

In the following paragraphs, I will further outline the ethical reflexivity regarding the use of video diaries according to what for analytical reasons I call: Research-based relations and public representation.

9. Research-based relations

It was evident that ethical concerns turned up as soon as I started testing the form and the method of collecting data using video diaries. First and foremost, questions of expectations became relevant. Did they expect me to respond to the videos by email or comment on the video the next time I saw them? Did they expect me to act upon their worries or joys? These questions became crucial, due to the design of the study using blended methodology, which meant that the researcher and the key informants met face to face on a regular basis throughout the project, i.e. when the researcher made field observations in the classroom or in clinical settings. To my surprise the key informants confirmed that they were happy to just upload the videos - they did not expect me to react upon them on an individual and regular basis. We agreed on this, but in real life it was not that easy. An example of this:

When I did field observations in clinical settings following the students at their clinical placements, the students did a video diary each day of the week I was at their unit. One week I follow Julie. I was very surprised by the work environment. The tone was harsh, and I observed situations in which Julie was either left alone with semi-critical patients or left with a nurse that clearly did not want to help Julie. One evening Julie uploaded a video where she described how miserable and alone she felt. I was going back to the unit the next day, and I was wondering what to do. In my field notes I wrote:

“Evening, XX.XX.2012.

[...] I can't change the situation for her, but obviously I can't just pretend nothing happened - or deny that I've seen the video. I have to show that I'm a researcher, but of course I'm also a human being, and I saw and felt her frustrations. I did see her, and I did hear her. (Field notes, Julie, XX.XX. 2012)

“The following day, YY.XX.2012.

I'm on my way to the hospital, the same route as yesterday, I have warm coffee in my jar, and this is my second day with Julie. Fully dressed in nursing uniform, I go to the nursing station where I meet Julie. I start by saying 'Hi Julie', put my hand on her shoulder, and tell her that I've seen the video diary. Julie looks at me, and she starts crying. I take her hand and tell her that we should go into another room, which we do. My immediate thought was that Julie shouldn't let the whole group of nurses see her in this vulnerable position. In only a few minutes they start to come into the office. The dayshift is about to begin. Julie's still crying. I respond: Julie, I agree, but as we talked about earlier it's not in my hands to help you here as a lecturer, but I will tell you that I

had similar thoughts when I left the hospital yesterday. If this continues you can either contact your lecturer at the school or the student advisor. My last words to Julie were: Don't let them do this to you - you're a good girl, hold on to that thought. Julie sweeps away the tears, and we go back to the nursing station." (Field notes, Julie, YY.XX. 2012)

Clearly, as the researcher I felt an ethical dilemma in the sense that I wanted to help Julie, as I knew would be proper if I had still been her lecturer, but at the same time I had made an agreement with the four key informants that after I entered the role as a full-time researcher, they could no longer turn to me as their lecturer. In that sense I had positioned myself as a researcher, not a lecturer. As shown in the example, this position became hard to hold on to. One could argue that I stepped out of that position for a moment when I advised Julie on what to do. One could also argue that I held on to the position by letting Julie know that I could not act directly on what I saw and what I was told, and in that sense stayed in the role of the researcher. In the literature the ethical dilemmas concerning the role of the researcher is discussed in multiple ways (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Kristiansen 2012). Hammersley & Atkinson state that the temptation to abandon the role as a researcher should be resisted, but add that "becoming a researcher does not mean, then, that one is no longer a citizen or a person, that one's primary commitment to research must be sustained at all cost" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p.229).

An ethical dilemma is characterized by the fact that there is no definitive right or wrong, so one could argue both for and against abandoning the role or resisting the urge to do so - and instead staying in the role of the researcher. Kristiansen (2012) describes how researchers may develop pragmatic principles to guide the researcher in deciding what is right, and what is wrong – and subsequently in how to act and react in the field. The principles are referred to as professional ethics of intimacy (in Danish: Professionel nærhedsetik), because it is close to the researcher and the people being researched, and in that sense in contrast to a general, distant and abstract ethical code. Hviid Jacobsen and Kristiansen present the following concepts to describe the 'professional ethics of intimacy'. First, it must be situated and contextual. Second, it must insist on ethical reflections as an integrated and independent part of the fieldwork as a whole, not just a disintegrated appendix of subsequent ethical rationalizations. And finally, it must be based on a common-sense understanding of what constitutes a decent interaction with people in general, and it has to be characterized by empathy, trying to see it from the perspective of the researched, and evaluative regarding the possible consequences of the research (Hviid Jacobsen and Kristiansen 2001).

Using video diaries as one of multiple methods of data collection, I argue that ethical dilemmas are inevitable and cannot *all* be accounted for upfront - they must be dealt with when occurring and "cannot be concluded until the researcher is actually in the field" (Pink 2007 p. 49). In doing so, the researcher may be guided by ethic codes, but also, and maybe even more important, by principles of empathy and common sense both contextualized and situated in the ongoing fieldwork. To conclude, ethical dilemmas will arise as soon as you enter the field. How you as a researcher handle these will depend on your knowledge of the field in which you are engaged and your ability to make decisions on what to do, and how to act or react.

10. Public representation

The concepts of anonymity and confidentiality are often considered central to educational research, but working with visual data, e.g. video diaries, anonymity and confidentiality are challenged. Wiles, Clark and Prosser even argue that it may be impossible and impractical to ensure anonymity and confidentiality when data are visual (Wiles, Clark, and Prosser 2011). In this study, the problems of anonymity were raised from the day I gave the four students the iPads. No one else in class had an iPad, and for that reason alone it was impossible to conceal the identities of the key informants, as everyone involved at the site and the organization knew that as part of the study I collected data through iPad video diaries. I could only help the informants protect themselves from the risk that others gained access to their videos by instructing them in the activation of passwords etc. on their iPads. To tell them that they would remain anonymous in the organization would not be correct, since a lot of people would link them to the E-class project due to the fact that they showed themselves in the class and in the clinical practice with the iPad. According to Walford, anonymity is still a common option in ethnographic research, but it may not be the most desirable choice (Walford 2008). The choice in this study was to use video diaries as a data collection method, even though it could possibly compromise the concept of anonymity, but at the same time make the choice visible for the informants and ensure that they knew this to be a possible outcome. In that sense, the informants were promised anonymity to the extent possible, considering that the ethnography took place in an organization involving many people at different levels and in different positions for a long period of time.

Doing visual ethnography also raises questions of how the visual material is used and represented. At my first meeting with the four students, we discussed how and for what reasons their videos would be used. The use of video diaries was primarily a method to collect data not otherwise obtainable in the classroom or in clinical practice, but also a way of giving the students a voice of their own in the study. The students signed a consent form, stating that the video diaries were not to be used at campus before their graduation, and if used at conferences or in other public presentations, they would get a pre-release view, enabling them to decide whether the researcher could use it in public in the given form. The choice not to show any parts or any quotes from the video diaries on campus before graduation was solely based on the fact that no matter how faces or voices were blurred, it would be almost impossible to preserve the anonymity of the student. The students would at this point still be subject to evaluations and examinations, so the choice was made to protect both the students and the evaluators. Pink (Pink 2007) states that questions of harm to individuals or institutions become pressing when it comes to the publication of, e.g., videos. The first videos presented publicly showed the students with a black box covering their faces in order to ensure their anonymity. It could be argued that this does indeed ensure anonymity, but it also compromises voices and disempowers the students in the study (Rose 2012; Holliday 2004). On campus I met with one of the key informants, and showed her the video diary before it was used in public, and her only comment was: *“You really don’t need to cover up my face”*. I agree that blurring faces could disempower the voices of the students, and I would like to add that this also puts the data at risk of losing its power as personal stories of formation. The point is: compelling stories not only empower the student voices but also the findings in the ethnography as a whole.

11. Zooming in - voices of the chosen ones?

In summary, video diaries give the researcher a chance to zoom in on the personal story of being an E-class student, and they have the potential to give a personal and subjective story, given that the video diaries follow the students' educational trajectory in real time and in contexts and spatial structures defined by the student. Boyd states: "We do ourselves a disservice if we bound our fieldwork by spatial structures - physical or digital - when people move seamlessly between these spaces" (Boyd 2008, p. 53). I agree - we should move with them - and will add that the video diaries offer a chance to do so. By handing out iPads to the key informants, they were offered a voice of their own. A voice not probed or directed by the researcher, but the voice of the subject. The form of the media was given, but one could say that the choice of lens focus was given to the storyteller with no chance for the researcher to interfere with the storytelling - the risk being no focus of interest for the research questions at stake, the gains being data not obtainable in classic fieldwork. In this study, this added a very important empirical analytical point, stating that on the way to becoming highly skilled and compassionate nurses, not only formal courses and classes in the formal settings count. Fellow students, teachers, clinical instructors, patients, family and friends also play an important part.

One could ask if it is possible to zoom in on the voices of the chosen ones and still remain true to the story of the E-class as an entire unit? As the storytellers are in fact E-class members, their stories will be founded in the E-class, but they are, of course, also individual. But given that video diaries are used in combination with classic fieldwork with interviews and observations both in classrooms and in clinical settings, the researcher is also given a chance to zoom out and look at the class as a whole, following 'an experimental educational model' at *The Department of Nursing at the Aarhus Campus*. The point is that video diaries may, of course, be regarded as giving voice to the chosen ones, but the method also contributes to the mix of voices representing the ethnography of the E-class.

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