

Co-construction of transitional spaces: An exploration of registering in special education classrooms.

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Abstract

Class-time is marked by planned schedules designed and managed by schools and their teachers to promote student learning and development. Clear and managed structure throughout the school day is implemented to create a positive learning environment. Transitional spaces within this structure can be less predictable than lesson-time. For children with additional needs, these spaces can be stressful or anxiety inducing. Order in the classroom is achieved through the dynamic intersections between student and teacher agency in social actions or interactional moves. Registering is a pervasive action in conversation, and has particular relevance in the classroom. This umbrella term describes an initiating action characterised by drawing mutual attention to a publicly perceptible referent. In studies of classroom transitional spaces, registering is frequently evident but not specifically explored. This study explores 89 instances of registering in the classroom, within 5.6 hours of video recordings in a special education primary school. Instances were analysed with a conversation analysis approach focussing on the co-construction of transitional spaces. Students displayed agency in registering during lesson and transitional spaces with peers and staff. Teachers promoted lesson related registering, restricted non-related registering and relaxed restrictions in transitional spaces. Teacher and student registering of expected behaviours contributed to the shaping of classroom conduct through student self-regulation. Registering actions in transitional spaces are resources for managing participation, and are used by both students and teachers. Transitional spaces provide insight into the continuous interactional achievement and negotiation of classroom schedules.

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