

Author: Kynaeslahti, Heikki.

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Heikki Kynäslähti.

Considerations on Eduscape.

Abstract

In this article I discuss some issues which are relevant to the present research in media education. My main emphasis is to outline a theoretical framework with which we can approach new educational space. The phrase 'new educational space' refers to considerations of the impact of information and communication technologies on the field of education. I argue that we need new concepts when we investigate educational flows which are divorced, more or less, from their physical, social and cultural context. We already have such concepts as virtual classroom, virtual school, on-line education, school without walls, etc. In my research of the virtual classroom (Kynäslähti 1997) I have attempted to find out where these phenomena are, whether we imagine any 'place' for them, and how we can locate them when we, for instance, try to outline them as ethnographic fields. In this article I would like to present answers to these questions. Unfortunately, I do not have much empirical evidence to support my considerations, so far. The *raison d'être* of this article is the need to develop a conceptual elaboration of this kind. The research and development projects that have been undertaken in the Media Education Centre (including LIVE, APPLAUD, and IMPACT) will, obviously, guide this conceptual work towards a better theorisation of this new educational space in future.

The concepts I will investigate here come from various fields. One of them is transnational culture. In the research of transnational culture, as discussed for example in the journal *Public Culture*, the idea of world wide 'scapes' has been discussed. I will continue this discussion in relation to media education. The theory of the networked society suggests

that there is a space of flows and I wish to make use of this notion in the context flows and I wish to make use of this notion in the context of media education. Deterritorialisation is another concept which helps us to investigate the phenomena of media education. All three of these topics relate to the tricky relationship between time and place. Furthermore, they all deal, more or less, with the big umbrella of globalisation.

TIME AND SPACE

I begin with the time-place nexus. This relationship has been widely discussed and there is no need to repeat the numerous turns of that discussion. I pick up some points which are relevant here.

One strand of this nexus comes from sociology. Giddens speaks of time-space distanciation. In so doing he refers to a process “which tears space away from place by fostering relations between ‘absent’ others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction” (Giddens 1990, 18). He speaks also about the “lifting out of social relationships from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across time and space” (Giddens 1990, 21). In other words, time and space become more abstract and the relationships between them diminish. Further, through the process of distanciation people and things become disembedded, i.e. lifted out, from concrete space and time. Following the logic of time–space distanciation, simultaneity divorces from place. The same things happen simultaneously in diverse locations and are experienced at the same time. Thus, simultaneity is not bound to place, but it is associated with a space without place, so to say. Distanciation releases us from territory. We are divorced from terra. Time-space distanciation does not, of course, refer only to geographical place but to social space as well.

However, I use here vocabulary which refers to physical context: land, ground, place etc. Now that we are distanciated, what happens next?

I take another strand of the time–space nexus from Harvey (1989). In his view of the postmodern geography of capitalism Harvey speaks about time–space compression, which points to experienced time in relation to diverse sites in space. I take an example from Waters. He states that if people in Tokyo and Helsinki experience the same thing at the same time, they in effect live in the same place. Hence, space has been annihilated by

time compression (Waters 1995, 55). Harvey associates this kind of compression and annihilation to the increasing speed with which spatial barriers can be overcome, which creates the feeling that the world is collapsing inwards upon us. Harvey illuminates this compression with shrinking maps of the world, noting the shortened time needed to travel from place to another which in turn annihilates space through time. “[T]ime horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is”, Harvey (1989, 240) claims. According to this view of time–space compression, we can speak of simultaneity in a global context. Here we have a global present as Harvey suggests.

The role of information and communication technologies is crucial for both of these two views. The intensity and speed made possible by these technologies create a space where global simultaneity is possible.

‘ SCAPES ’

Above we departed from *terra firma* and entered into a space which is not bound to the givenness of geographical things and physical reality. In the following I will discuss this space in the terms of ‘landscapes’ which cover the world with different kinds of flows.

The idea of global ‘scapes’ provides a fruitful perspective to investigate a variety of phenomena which link people from different localities, cultures and nations together. Arjun Appadurai argues that the global cultural flow can be explored by looking at five dimensions: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *finanscapes*, and *ideascapes*.

Appadurai sees these ‘scapes’ as “deeply perspectival constructs” of different kinds of actors: “nations-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighbourhoods and families” (Appadurai 1990, 296). *Ethnoscapes* concern the changing group identity of moving people, including immigrants, guestworkers, refugees, exiles etc. They are landscapes of group identity that belong to groups which are deterritorialized, i.e. transcended regarding their specific territorial boundaries and identities. *Ethnoscapes* can be substituted for earlier ‘wholes’, such as villages, communities, and localities. *Mediascapes* deal with the distribution of information, which is facilitated with information and communication technologies, and with the images of the world that these media create. *Ideascapes* are “composed of elements

of the Enlightenment world-view, which consists of a concentration of ideas, terms and images, including 'freedom', 'welfare', 'rights' ... and master-term 'democracy' (Appadurai 1990, 299). Why not also 'education'? *Technoscapes* and *finanscapes* refer both to economical interests across national boundaries and to the flow of money and technology at the global level. (Appadurai 1990; 1991). I present the idea of this kind of 'scapes' here as a background for the discussions of the global flow of education. I propose that we can imagine a horizontal integrative landscape in the field of education which have the characteristics of these five dimensions of global flows.

DETERRITORIALISATION

I continue with Appadurai's words: "There is an urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what is now called deterritorialisation. This term applies not only to obvious examples such as transnational corporations and money markets, but also to ethnic groups, secretarian movements, and political formations, which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities." (Appadurai 1992, 192; italics original). For Appadurai deterritorialisation means people's moving and travelling from place to place. It deals also with financial flows and the trade of commodities which occur independent of national boundaries. Accordingly, the various 'scapes' he mentions are examples of deterritorialised processes functioning more or less independent of physical realities. In Appadurai's view, as we can see, the transcendence of territorial boundaries is a crucial part of deterritorialisation.

We can, however, trace a more profound basis for this concept. In doing so, we come to Deleuze and Guattari. I approach the fascinating world of Deleuzeguattarian philosophy with an entry that may be identified with Appadurai's definition of deterritorialisation. Arnason shows of how Deleuze uses this concept to describe the schizophrenic system of capitalism. In serving the interests of the individual, capitalism "deterritorialize[s] all territorial groupings such as the church, the family, the group, indeed any social arrangement. But at the same time, since capitalism requires social groupings in order to function, it must allow for reterritorializations, new social groupings, new forms of the state, the family, or the group." (Arnason)

The texts of Deleuze and Guattari are difficult to follow as their ideas are expressed in a complicated fashion.

However, they give us a definition of deterritorialisation which is elegant in its simplicity: “Deterritorialization is the movement by which ‘one’ leaves the territory” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 508). This movement is the operation of flight which is obstructed by reterritorialisation. Thus, in Arnason’s example “new social groupings”, “new forms of the state” etc. obstruct deterritorialisation and “‘stand for’ the lost territory”, as Deleuze and Guattari put it. The enchantment of deterritorialisation for the research of new educational phenomena (like the virtual classroom) in media education is apparent. Their charm is by no means lessened by the fact that such concepts as nomad and rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 1987; Deleuze 1992; see also Tella 1998 in this volume and Nummi et al. 1998) originate from these two philosophers.

SPACE OF FLOWS

The term flow is worth further consideration. Castells (1996) uses it to outline the interaction between society, space and technology. He speaks of the network society, where he finds tendencies toward a new spatial logic of space of flows, instead of the space of places. Flows are “purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions” (Castells 1996, 412). We can find a continuity between Castells’ space of flows and Appadurai’s scapes:

“ ... our society is constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols” (Castells 1996, 411-412). The circuit of electronic impulses is a fundamental supporting layer for the space of flows. In other words, it is a question of the use of information and communication technologies. Castells presents an interesting hierarchy of nodes and hubs.

The space of flows is not placeless, although its structural logic is. It is based on an electronic network, but this network links up specific places, with well-defined social, cultural, physical, and functional characteristics. Some places are exchangers, communication hubs playing a role of coordinator for the smooth interaction of all the elements integrated in the network. Other places are the nodes of the network, that is the

location of strategically important functions that build a series of locality-based activities and organisations around a key function in the network. Location in the node links up the locality with the whole network. (Castells 1996, 413)

The idea of global dynamics of flows and the idea of space where these flows occur, is interesting regarding to the focus of this article. Further, we should note the stand Castell takes on the micro-macro nexus: “I propose a hypothesis that the space of flows is made up of personal micro-networks that project their interests in functional macro-networks throughout the global set of interactions in the space of flows” (Castells 1996, 416). This is in accordance with the perspective of globalisation which I will present in the following: the micro-perspective of individuals and groups interacting with the macroperspective of the processes of globalisation.

GLOBALISATION

Similar to the question of time in relation to space, the issue of globalisation is broad. (Raimo Väyrynen’s ‘Globalisaatio’ [1998] provides a good and fresh general view of this topic.) It is neither possible nor sensible to discuss the topic in depth here. On the other hand, I cannot ignore the global character of all those issues I have discussed in this article. Time–space compression, ‘scapes’, space of flows—all these point to global interconnections and, thus, to globalisation.

The perspective from which I investigate the processes of globalisation is based on individuals and on people in their local context. The usual way to discuss globalisation concentrates on the tension between nation states and the world as a whole. In other words, globalisation concerns the developments which have made national borders more permeable than before. What interests me here is the intentions of individuals and groups of people in their local contexts to establish educational connections regardless of geographical, cultural or other similar borders. I am interested in situations where people are eager to benefit from the processes of globalisation for their own profit and want to use the benefits that the information society provides. As early as 1972 Burton suggested a shift from investigations of international relations to a focus on networks and systems relationships between individuals and collectives (for example regarding ethnicity, religion, communications links, etc.) transcending state boundaries. Later Rosenau (1980)

emphasised the importance of relations between non-governmental individuals and groups which operate at the global level. Robertson is among other leading figures in this field who pay attention to the individual perspective in the processes of globalisation.

As the reader surely has noticed, what fascinates me in these global relations is their character as meeting 'places' or as spaces which no longer have a particular geographical reference, in the other words, spaces which do not follow physical and geographical realities. In these spaces individuals meet each other in the context of some institutional performance (for example distance education) which answers their personal needs, virtual communities (for example newsgroups), etc. It is people, individuals or groups, that constitute these global spaces. I agree with Robertson when he declares "I insist that individuals are as much a part of the globalization process as any other basic category of social-theoretical discourse" (Robertson 1992, 104). He disagrees with statements that globalisation necessarily refers to very large-scale matters. In the background of Robertson's emphasis on individuals in the processes of globalisation, is individualism. He refers to education, among other things, pointing to the role of international organisations in promoting individualism in the area of education (Robertson 1992, 105). This is in accordance with the development of terminology in media education. Seppo Tella (1998) has emphasised the shift from institution-centred thinking towards a student-centred one in the field of open and distance learning.

EDUSCAPE

Finally, I want to bring together the diverse issues I have discussed in this article and to link them with media education. First, time and space have moved away from each other. Simultaneity has abandoned place and is now allied with information and communication technologies, creating a global present, a single 'place'. On the other hand, Appadurai suggests that there are world-wide flows which flourish in global 'scapes' and Castells, in turn, proposes that there is even a space for this kind of flows. All these issues point to deterritorialisation. Phenomena are divorced from their context, rearranged and finally replaced.

The aim of this article, as I mentioned in the beginning, has been to search for a new educational space—a space which is created with the help of the intensive use of

information and communication technologies. Putting together the strands of this article I discover the eduscape. The eduscape is a world-wide 'scape' of educational flows which people can reach regardless of their location and regardless of the physical reality they live in. It is a space of education which has been divorced from its context, flowing through technologies, to be taken in use by people within their own context. Here we have deterritorialisation as well as reterritorialisation. Finally, it is a space where we can imagine a home, a 'place' for, among others, virtual classrooms.

This is my first real attempt to define eduscape. Thus, it is a modest one. The previous lines are speculative and I have not presented any empirical evidence in support of my theoretical construction. Certainly, I am very aware of the weaknesses of my formulation of eduscape. However, I argue that this is one possible path for media education to explore. We need research which operates with broad theoretical frameworks as Tella's definition of media education (Tella 1997; cf. also Tella 1998 in this publication) suggests. Similarly, the discussion which has taken place in the journal *Aikuiskasvatus* (Suoranta 1997) calls for a wider perspective of research which pays attention to social and cultural aspects of media education. I have tried to do my part here, so far.

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