

Data and Services Discovery projects - Transformative Data Collections

Title

Transforming Research Communities: Data Archiving, Sharing and Re-Use in Qualitative Social Sciences

Approach

This project comprised (1) the development and management of a new archival repository of qualitative research data collections housed by the Australian Data Archive (ADA), and (2) a new website, Studies of Childhood, Education & Youth (SOCEY) which provides a portal to this repository and aims to support a community of practice for strengthening researcher engagement in curating data collections for future use by others. The website is published at <https://socey.hasscloud.net.au/> and the repository is linked from the website and available at <https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/SOCEY>.

Specifically, funding was used to:

1. Support the archiving of six research projects in the SOCEY repository. This comprised hiring casual research assistants to support the process, including anonymising data where appropriate.
2. Report on best practices in archiving and sharing qualitative data in the social sciences
3. Host a community engagement workshop asking government, non-government and community sector representatives to engage with the new website and discuss how the data and repository could be better structured and formatted to meet their needs and support broader engagement and use.

The projects selected for archiving in the repository were ones that were already led by SOCEY community members. A call for expressions of interest for archiving projects was distributed to all Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) members but no responses were received.

Datasets from each project have been or are soon to be published in the SOCEY repository, and each has been allocated a discrete DOI. The projects include:

1. Schooling Memories: Educating the Adolescent, 1930s–1970s, a collection of oral history interviews with former teachers, students, curriculum personnel, guidance officers and school counsellors who were at school in the decades from the 1930s to the 1970s, conducted as part of a broader Australian Research Council Discovery Project (led by Julie McLeod and Katie Wright, archived by Emily Fitzgerald) (DOI: 10.26193/R8ACQQ)

2. Globally Mobile Lives and Suburban Government Schooling, a doctoral research project comprising interviews with secondary school students with experience of work and education across different national contexts and their parents (led and archived by Joanne Higginson) (DOI: 10.26193/0DYJM0)
3. Childhood Maltreatment and Public Inquiries, an historical sociological ARC DECRA project that examined the unfolding of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse alongside past Australian inquiries, comprising interviews with advocates of abuse survivor groups, commissioners and staff members of Inquiries, and journalists (led by Katie Wright, archived by Sari Braithwaite) (DOI:10.26193/FMLEUT)
4. The Curriculum Policies Project, a collection of interviews with 17 state curriculum experts and education policy makers conducted as part of a broader Australian Research Council Discovery Project (led by Lyn Yates, archived by Henry Reese) (DOI:10.26193/6JG0DM)
5. Making Futures, a longitudinal interview-based study of young people in the final years of their schooling and their parents conducted as part of an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship (led by Julie McLeod, archived by Monika Popovski) (DOI: 10.26193/R2BRKW)
6. Our Lives Asylum Seekers, comprising summaries of interviews with young people in Queensland conducted as part of a doctoral research project (led by Zlatko Skrbiš and Jacqueline Laughland-Booÿ, archived by Rachel Flenley and Henry Reese) (DOI: 10.26193/FDKLDI)

Our discussion paper – published at <https://socey.hasscloud.net.au/repository/discussion-paper/> – draws on our experiences archiving these pilot projects, as well as a wider review of international guidelines on best practice in qualitative data archiving and sharing. Its findings are summarised in the ‘Learnings’ section below.

The community engagement workshop was conducted on 20 September and was attended by colleagues from the university sector as well as 15 representatives from organisations including federal and state departments, local councils, non-government organisations such as The Smith Family, the Brotherhood of St Lawrence and Save the Children, and schooling bodies such as the Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Victoria. This event enabled us to develop useful partnerships with potential end-users of the website and provided feedback on the website and archive which we will start to implement over the coming months. A summary of this event has been published on the SOCEY website at <https://socey.hasscloud.net.au/2019/10/04/workshop-engaging-with-qualitative-data-in-studies-of-childhood-education-and-youth/>

FAIR

The archiving of projects was completed in line with FAIR principles. The repository is fully searchable, and the data provided in an open format and with utility for sharing. Some restrictions have been applied to the datasets which allow the project owner to mediate requests

to access the data according to ethical requirements. Some datasets are also currently under embargo periods as the owners need to publish their findings before the data can be released. Our report (linked above) discusses the issue of FAIR data further in section 5.3.

Collaboration and coverage

The new website and repository represents projects and researchers from across Australia. The SOCEY website includes 16 community members located at the University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, Deakin University and Monash University (Victoria), Australian National University (ACT), and the Australian Catholic University (Queensland).

The projects archived in the repository are owned by researchers from the University of Melbourne, La Trobe and the Australian Catholic University. The data archived includes interviews with young people located in Victoria and Queensland, interviews with curriculum policy leaders located in NSW, Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria, oral history interviews with participants who attended or taught in schools in the 1930s, 50s and 70s from Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, and interviews with people engaged with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Victoria and New South Wales.

The policy workshop was mainly attended by representatives from Victorian bodies, but also included two representatives from the Australian Data Archive, and one from the Federal Department of Education and Training (both located in Canberra).

Sustainability

Beyond this grant, the project CIs and the Australian Data Archive are committed to supporting the development of a comprehensive SOCEY repository and community. CIs McLeod and O'Connor have submitted an EOI as part of the ARDC Platforms Open Call with the aim of securing funding to continue this work and have been approved to continue to the full application process.

The SOCEY repository is housed by the Australian Data Archive (ADA). The ADA is a Core Trust Seal certified repository, and is committed to the indefinite preservation of the data held in its dataverse. Each dataset has been allocated a global persistent identifier in the form of a DOI in the ADA Dataverse. Where changes are made to the dataset, versions of the data are stored and recorded in the metadata. Hosting for the SOCEY website is also provided by the Tinker (formerly HASS DEVL) project which provides a secure platform.

Learnings

Key learnings from this project are summarised in the report and include the following:

1. Decisions regarding data archiving and sharing should ideally be considered from the start of the research process, and further work is needed to encourage researchers to do this.
2. Standardised wording is needed for developing consent forms which provide appropriate and unambiguous archiving options
3. Protocols can be established for best practice in anonymisation of research materials, but this process needs to take into account the particular purposes and contexts of the research project
4. Ethical issues relating to consent and identification should be managed at the outset of the project, but also revisited throughout the research and archival process.
5. Archived qualitative datasets have value not just in terms of the potential for re-use but also in terms of deepening understanding of the methods and nature of qualitative research, and the selection of materials for deposit should take this into consideration
6. Qualitative research involving children and young people should generally be considered to contain sensitive data, and be made available via facilitated access, unless this is determined as not necessary by the lead researcher.
7. It is essential that those who have created and curated the data initially maintain full control over how data is managed, mediated, shared and accessed.

Impact

Our next phase of work enabled by this grant will include:

- Submission of an application for an ARDC Platforms grant (completed)
- Presentation on the work completed to date at the national Australian Association for Research in Education conference (Brisbane, 4 December 2019)
- Development of more comprehensive guidelines for archiving qualitative data in collaboration with the ADA
- Promotion of the SOCEY website and repository
- Publication of 2-3 peer-reviewed research articles relating to this body of work over the next two years
- Further collaborations with end-users, including additional workshops and communications (anticipated 2-3 events over the next two years)

More broadly, the project provides materials of value to other research areas in the social sciences and a model for developing future collections. The website and repository will significantly benefit the social science qualitative research community, providing an avenue to showcase, disseminate and share research data and findings and enhance opportunities for scholarly and social impact. Additionally, a repository of qualitative data collections in the sociology of youth and education will be of significant interest to policy makers and community groups addressing educational inequality and young people's pathways. The project has enabled us to enhance our relationship with the ADA and develop new connections with community and policy organisations. In time, the website aims to provide a first port of call for parties interested in qualitative research on young people, leveraging off what is already

available online for individual studies, and to enable interested parties to develop a stronger understanding of the breadth of work occurring as well as the intersections and gaps across various studies.

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Date: 14/11/2019