Studying up, down, sideways, and through

Dina Bowman
dbowman@bsl.org.au

Brotherhood of St Laurence
Lunchtime forum
August 6, 2009
Overview

1. Studying up
2. Studying down
3. Studying sideways
4. Studying through
5. Questions and discussion
Studying up

‘Studying up, down and sideways simultaneously’

Links to ‘larger processes of change’ (Nader 2008)

Power and research practice:

• Access and methodology
• Attitudes and ethics
  • ‘Difficult choices’
• Activism, advocacy, and discretion
Studying down

Power and research practice:

Access and methodology
- Information about disadvantaged categories of people
- Information / knowledge/ understandings from people who live with disadvantage
- Being ‘hard to reach’ as a form of power

Attitudes and ethics
- Power relations and interpretation of data
- Resistance and ‘unbearably loud’ silence
Studying sideways

Studying ourselves and others like us

Reflexivity
Understanding how who we are affects the research process

Situated research
Systematically evaluating our position in the wider context and how it affects the research process
Studying through seeks to trace ‘the ways in which power creates webs and relations between actors, institutions and discourses across time and space.’ (Shore and Wright 1997:11 added emphasis)

Social network analysis

‘... requires a clear sense of which kinds of networks are most important to the forms of power or agency that matter most’ (Considine et al. 2009:15).
Situated research

- attitudes
- ethics
- access
- methodology
- connections, and
- power.


Thank you