



Sanne Akkerman

Crossing boundaries within and beyond a professional practice

In my talk I want to reconsider the way we look at and understand a professional practice. I want to begin arguing that many professional practices are increasingly multi-voiced and multiple, in the sense of incorporating various, culturally and historically different professional systems simultaneously. The question I want to address is how we can conceptualize this situation, moving beyond the still dominant “singular” approach in research on professions. Relying on literature on boundary crossing, I interpret the impact of multi-voicedness and multiplicity in professions on daily work as both challenging and as offering potential for development.

Two empirical case studies are presented in more detail, including an *academic professional development school partnership*, in which a research institute, a teacher education department and five primary schools collaborate for five years and, *an inter-university research project*, where four research groups collaborate in order to realize theoretical innovation. Indirectly, both cases indicate how multiplicity of a professional practice also concerns our *own* profession: science.

By presenting these case studies, I want to point out what I see as the main methodological challenges in understanding boundary crossing in professional practices, discussing: 1) boundary crossing as including development at institutional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal level, as well as interactions between these levels; 2) the intra-personal level as unpredictable in terms of units of analysis, and 3) dialogicality as creating continuous movement beyond what is directly observable.