

Brown Bag Seminar OHRM

Term:	Autumn 2013
Speaker:	Nick Llewellyn, Professor of Organisational Behaviour
Title:	Knowledge, Embodiment and Mundane Reason in Routine Service Work
Date:	Wednesday 16 th October 2013
Venue:	E2.02, Social Studies Boardroom, Warwick Business School
Time:	13.00 – 14.00 hours
Abstract	<p>This brown bag seminar is based on a paper I am writing about knowledge in routine work. It will consider the work of issuing tickets to queuing customers, work increasingly performed by machines or on-line. I am interested in how far routine monotonous service work nevertheless requires employees to engage with the thoughts and problems of another subject.</p> <p>Drawing on ethnomethodology, a corpus of video recordings are analysed, where the customers' knowledge of service categories ('gift aid', 'standard', 'adult', 'grounds entry', 'concession') and policies ('does the standard ticket include entrance to the grounds'; 'does the standard ticket include entrance to all exhibitions'; 'does the customer need to buy a ticket first, before visiting the café') was at stake. I analyse how employees access customer knowledge, through an immediate practical analysis of their talk and embodied activity. The availability of knowledge, from the way people talk, cast their gaze, gesture and handle objects, is a general interest for me and one I explore further through this presentation.</p> <p>Organisationally, the presentation starts to recover a 'local epistemic order', consisting of rules, entitlements and customs relating to the management of knowledge. This local order covers things like 'what the customer should know', 'what they should be able to find-out for themselves' and 'how they should behave when confronted with their own lacking knowledge'. Linked to this, the thorny issue of 'known-unknowns' (party A thinks they know, but party B can see they don't) verses 'unknown-unknowns' (party A does not know whether party B knows) is addressed. This raises tricky methodological problems for the social scientist and organisational problems for people doing and managing work.</p> <p>The presentation ends with a discussion about the implications of the study for our understanding of knowledge, routine service work and local work orders.</p>
Contact:	<p>This seminar has been organised by the OHRM Group.</p> <p>Racheal Monnington, OHRM Group racheal.monnington@wbs.ac.uk 024 7652 3671</p>