Recovering from Ethnographic Loss:
Memory, witnessing and historical responsibility as a way of understanding securitized young lives in South Africa

In this talk, Dr Dillabough will revisit the ethnographic dilemmas associated with ethnographic witnessing and representing, the capacity to re-represent suffering and point to the power of memory and ‘home’ in the making of ethnographies in higher education. She will draw, in particular, on the challenges and dilemmas of a five-year long ethnography of youth disadvantage undertaken in South Africa – especially work with former ANC freedom fighters – who had experienced their youth as both militarized and tortured during Apartheid and after the period of their activity.

- What does it mean to witness and report?
  - Was I the right person to witness?
- Where do memory and witnessing appear in the artistic moves of the ethnography?
- What artistic tools are to hand that might make witnessing suffering more valuable?
- What are our ‘burdens of authorship’ now and into the future?
- How do we ensure that such witnessing does not become a commodification or a personalization of culture, and how can witnessing and responsibility in ethnography become something that challenges trends in education research which positions the researcher as “other to the self”?

Refreshments served