



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

THE PRACTICE OF PHENOMENOLOGY IN EDUCATION & RESEARCH

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This presentation is broadly based on the following papers:

“The practice of phenomenology in educational research”
(*Educational Philosophy & Theory*, vol. 55, no. 7)

“Phenomenology and phenomenography in educational research: A critique”
(*Educational Philosophy & Theory*, vol. 52, no. 10)

“Embodiment and education: beyond the gap”
(*The Body, Embodiment, and Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach*)

“Phenomenology, embodiment, and education:
first-person methodologies of embodied subjectivity”
(*The Body, Embodiment, and Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach*)

“Contemporary education and guiding pedagogical principals:
the prospects for an embodied and intersubjective interpretation of phenomenology”
(*Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 48, no. 5)

“Emphasising an embodied phenomenological sense of the self and the social in education”
(*British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 69, no. 3)

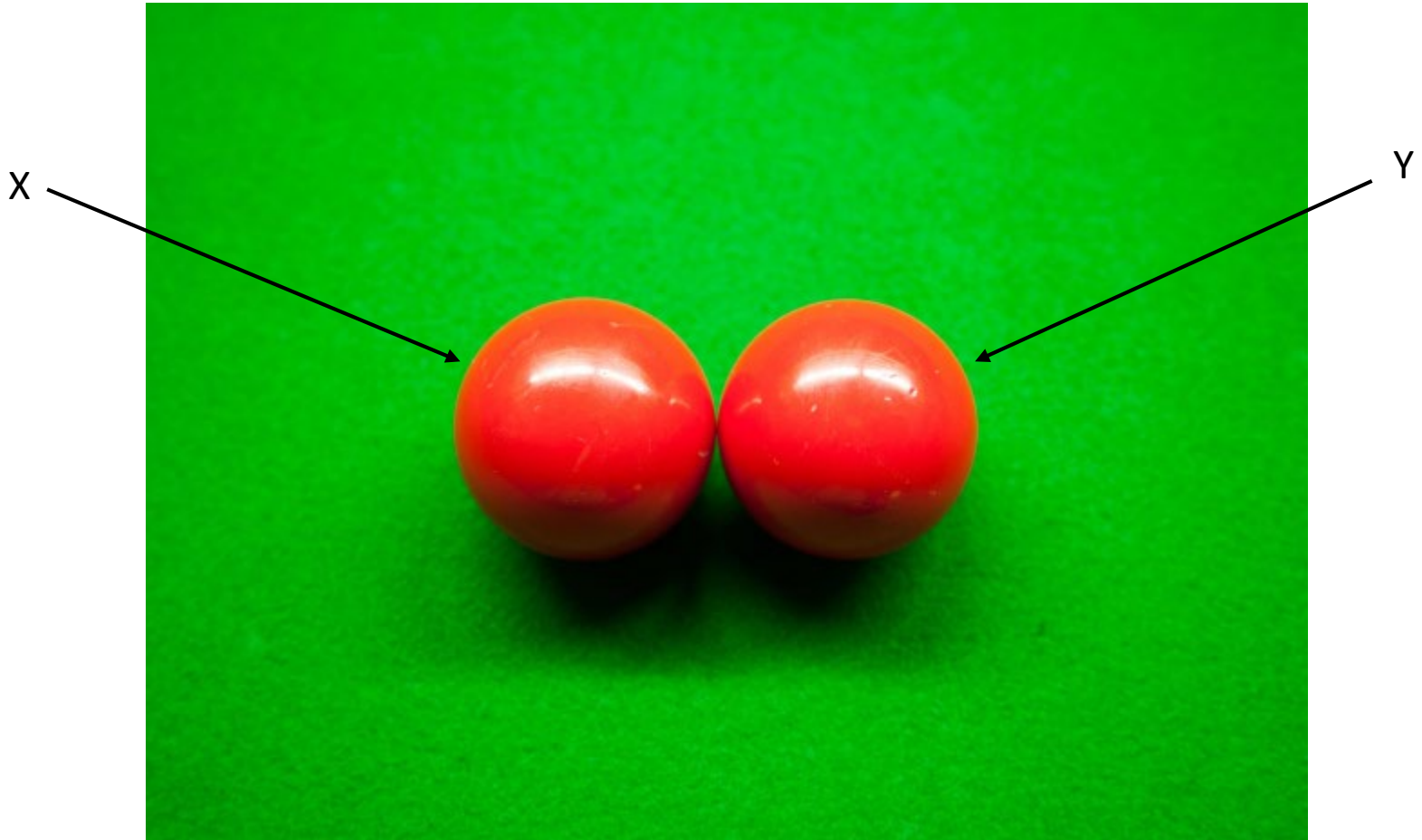
“Understanding experience better in educational contexts:
the phenomenology of embodied subjectivity”
(*Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 50, no. 1)

“Where Merleau-Ponty meets Dewey: habit, embodiment, and education”
(*Studies in Philosophy and Education*, “in press”)

Introduction

Phenomenology: some foundational issues

An opening exercise



Phenomenology's project

Phenomenology, education & research: applied phenomenology

Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method

Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method, consists of the following core steps:

- (1) *phenomenological reduction*;
- (2) *description*; and,
- (3) disclosing *essences* or *structures*.

Max van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology

Max van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology, consists of the following:

- (1) (*hermeneutic*) *phenomenological concepts* are employed to make sense of phenomenon being investigated;
- (2) appropriate phenomenological questions are used for collecting experiential data from participants, specifically for the purposes of *phenomenological analysis* and *reflection*; and,
- (3) existential themes unlock the meaning of all lived human experience through a process of *interpretation*.

Smith's interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)

Smith's interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), normally takes the following form:

- (1) *hermeneutic phenomenology* can be used to interpret an individual's lived experience of particular events and/or life-episodes;
- (2) appropriately structured phenomenological questions are used for collecting data from a small purposive sample of participants so it can be analysed through a process of *interpretation* (i.e., themes); and,
- (3) the researcher constructs an *interpretative account* of what they think are the meanings inherent in the participants' experience.

Conceptual clarity concerning the use & application of phenomenology in non-philosophical contexts

It is worth noting the strong point made by Gallagher & Zahavi (2021, p. 28), that the main aim of phenomenology:

“... is not to describe idiosyncratic experience – ‘here and now, this is just what I experience.’ Phenomenology is not interested in the world according to Gallagher, or the world according to Zahavi, or the world according to you. It is not interested in how particular events and life episodes are experienced by particular individuals but in the essential structures characterizing our experiences, their correlates, and the connection between the two.”

The practice of phenomenology in non-philosophical contexts: looking beyond the qualitative literature

Some brief concluding comments ...

Varela & Shear's (1999b) chapter is helpful to all researchers who may be interested in the use and application of phenomenological concepts in non-philosophical contexts:

- (1) Provide a clear *procedure* (i.e., method) for accessing and investigating a particular phenomena or phenomenal domain; and,
- (2) Provide a clear means of *expression* and *validation* (i.e., intersubjectivity) within a community of observers who have familiarity with (1).

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Q&A

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