

Call for Papers: Special Issue of South African Journal of Education Volume 32(4), November 2012

Visual Methodologies in Educational Research

Guest Editor: Naydene de Lange

An article by Claudia Mitchell that appeared in SAJE in 2008 paves the way for this call for papers. Mitchell, who introduced visual methodologies into education research in South Africa, writes “... I address educational research in South Africa at a time when questions of the social responsibility of the academic researcher (including postgraduate students as new researchers, as well as experienced researchers expanding their repertoire of being and doing) are critical” (2008:265). What is the social responsibility of the academic researcher? More particularly, what is the social responsibility of the academic researcher in the social sciences, and in education, in particular? Of course we know that it is, in part, researching relevant topics so as to generate new knowledge that might be useful in understanding the educational challenges with which society is confronted. But what if the educational researcher, through the chosen methodology, could, at the same time, contribute to social change? What if the researchers in the ivory tower of academia could cross the moat to the education communities around them, and engage in research which could, potentially, make an immediate difference in the lives of these people? While there has been a burgeoning of ‘alternative’ and innovative methodologies in the social sciences in general, South African educational researchers are engaging in cutting edge visual research (see for example the work of De Lange, Ebersohn, Karlsson, Khau, Moletsane, Mitchell, Olivier, Pithouse, Stuart, Theron, Van Laren, Wood). Visual methodologies in educational research have been used in the study of resilience, sexuality, gender, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS; with learners, students, educators, parents, community health workers, department officials, academics; and in urban, peri-urban and rural contexts. However, I concur with Mitchell (2008:265) that we need to “... ensure that the term “visual methodologies” is not simply reduced to one practice or to one set of tools ... and ... at the same time ... ensure that this set of methodologies and practices is appreciated within its full complexity”. It is this complexity that this special issue seeks to explore by bringing together a collection of research articles each of which demonstrates robustly the value of using the visual as a mode of inquiry, a mode of representation and a mode of dissemination, while also engaging critically with the conceptual, methodological, interpretive and ethical issues peculiar to visual methodologies. Working “...with the visual creates a generative space for looking, and then looking anew... [which] ... for researchers and research students new to the area of visual methodologies ... can be a liberating experience” (Mitchell, 2011: xiii).

Mitchell C 2008. Getting the picture and changing the picture: visual methodologies and educational research in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 28:365-383.

Mitchell C 2011. *Doing visual research*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington, DC: Sage.

Completed manuscripts should be e-mailed for review to estelle.botha@up.ac.za.

Closing date for submissions: 15 April 2012