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Qualitative researcher Julianne Moss draws on poststructuralist and critical theories of research and knowledge production to situate and reflect on her Australian research into inclusion. She works with a normative sense of justice and equity but also with/against the provisionality and partiality of truth and meaning.

Introduction

In recent years as a qualitative researcher working in Australia I have used visual data sources captured through digital methods to understand the complexity of diverse student needs. Designing policy and curriculum studies, my interest lies in how difference manifests in education systems and, once inside schools, how understandings of diversity work amongst early career teachers, experienced teachers, students, policymakers and parents. I take up the challenge of doing research during the ‘seventh moment’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 3) of qualitative research, the moment that Denzin and Lincoln state is concerned with the ‘moral discourse, with the development of sacred textualities . . . critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class nation-states, globalization, freedom and community’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 3).

Methodological positioning

In this chapter I report on two small-scale studies. The first study, the middle-school project, focuses on Grade 7, a stage of the middle years of schooling, in a comprehensive secondary school. The second is an ongoing policy review of inclusive schooling. Both studies were carried out in Tasmania, the smallest and only island state of Australia. My methodological orientation is enacted through critical and democratic research practices. I emphasise the importance of being alert to issues of identity and difference and the limitations of research that aims to promote the hierarchy and exclusivity of existing cultural arrangements for researchers and the researched.

In qualitative research, it is possible to interpret texts, including images, from
the ‘linguistic tradition which treats text as an object of analysis itself’ (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 259). Methodologically my position is closer to the sociological tradition, through the production of texts as free flowing, the ‘windows into experience’ (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 290) of students, parents, teachers and policymakers during times of curriculum change. Ryan and Bernard (2003) show in detail how these differing analytical approaches are used in qualitative research. I, however, see these approaches as being a potential continuum in a research design and, particularly when we are using visual methods, the separation is debated although questionable.

As Marcus Banks, a visual social anthropologist, pointed out over a decade ago, whilst visual data has become of concern to the social sciences in two ways, first through visual records produced by the researchers (examining pre-existing visual representations) and second through visual documents produced by the participants under study (studying society by producing images), significantly ‘this dichotomy between the observer and the observed has begun to collapse (as it has across the qualitative social sciences more generally)’ and has resulted in ‘a third kind of visual record or more accurately representation has emerged: the collaborative representation’ (Banks, 1995).

Having engaged with the ‘never-ending struggle for social justice’ (Lather & Smithies 1997, p. 50) over three decades of practice in education, I have also been concerned to see how socially just values are enacted by education researchers. How do researchers design and construct collaborative representations? What challenges do these types of representations pose for qualitative research and education research in particular? I have spent as many of my working years inside school systems and policymaking bodies as I have spent studying and working in higher education. My prior experience and positioning makes me alert to the effect of the researchers’ stance and positioning on their methodological orientation. I persist in developing and refining methods that can be used in small-scale studies by practitioners, who more often than not are engaging in research to complete a higher education qualification. Despite the burgeoning qualitative literature, visual methods remain under-represented in the field of education.

**Researching two policy stories**

I understand visual data as sources that allow readers and viewers of research to assemble the complications of the lived experience and cultural meanings from image. Visual sources can be read through *form* and *content*. ‘Form and content’, as Banks (2001, p. 51) points out, are ‘analytically separate-able but inextricably linked’. Typically, *form* can be understood through questions such as, what is the ‘meaning’ of this particular angle, design, motif, colour, assemblage, performance? Who is the person/group in the visual? *Content* of image asks who produced the image or performance, and for whom? Why was this image taken or made of this particular person, and either kept or discarded? It is also useful to consider how *form* and *content* are juxtaposed. Is one privileged
over the other, and if so in what particular social context/s? The ambiguities encountered in an image are not obstacles to ‘understanding’ but a cause to hesitate, inviting, for example, memories and metaphors derived from everyday experiences, ‘the distinctive texture of social relations in which it [image] is performing its work’ (Banks, 2001, p. 51).

The two studies detailed in the chapter, although originating from differing research designs, generate data through digital processes, via cameras (35-mm, digital or disposable) and develop them into a documentary record through scanned images or participant-created images enhanced by multimedia effects. In both cases, working as a qualitative researcher in education I regularly remind myself that:

- analysis of these data occurs throughout the research
- research methods are inseparable from theory
- theory and analysis are also inseparable from each other
- visual data can uniquely engage the researcher and the researched in spatial performances, moving bodies, conversations and action in collaboration or through traditional researcher/researched relationships
- visual data and the subsequent analysis draws not only from familiar territory, in my case curriculum and policy studies, but from a wide range of fields, including narrative theory, ‘technoliteracy’, cultural studies and visuality
- I am sometimes blind to the encounters I am experiencing; ethically my reflexivity is paramount and I know new ethical challenges are being created
- I am a learner making the most of interdisciplinary processes, particularly as I work and rework over extended periods of time the intertextual experiences of generating, analysing and producing accounts
- no single visual approach is a neat fit; there are as many takes possible within visual methods as there are with any qualitative method
- pictures and images are differing constructions; theories of visual culture inform these distinctions
- there is order to my processes; I generate, assemble, analyse, review and perform my findings dependent on the research problem, but I remain alert to the dynamic and interaction of these processes.

In my research using the visual, I set out not to impose a single storyline to the sequence of the images that I assemble as text – to do so would inhibit or deny their own language and manner of construction as active constituents of aesthetic production. With each of the studies I have continued to allow the multiple meanings of the sequence of photographs collected from the research sites to continue to circulate. I regularly use the gallery of images from each study as part of my teaching and, in the study of inclusive schooling, have continued to gather imagery from the local press and official systems documents. Circulating
these data through conference presentations, academic publication and teaching about curriculum and inclusive education, I have found visual sources to be readily taken up and questioned by other readers and viewers. Be it a policy or curriculum story, these data work to unsettle. It is important to stress that I do not view the visual unproblematically. In the wider field of visual culture, it is recognised that visual culture, like material, oral or literary culture, can be an ‘instrument of domination’ (Mitchell, 2005, p. 350).

Both studies use ‘framed’ digital format photographs as data. I deliberately scare the word ‘framed’ as I am wary of being framed, in this case by realist accounts that merely see image as representation of data used to illustrate the text or elicit student responses that take on the character of the interview. Photograph, as Bach (2007, p. 284) notes, is a verb. Photographs and imagery are ambiguous, people make and take images that matter to them. As John Berger asserts, ‘this is why the visual is astonishing and why memory, based upon the visual, is freer than reason’ (Berger, 1972, p. 133). In advocating his stance I am attempting to respond to the claims of the literature, particularly in the field of inclusive schooling, where research should recognise ‘the complexity and plurality of perspectives, voices and interests and the need for researchers to make them explicit’ (Booth & Ainscow, 1998, p. 246), the movement away from the essentialist traditions of the special education field, a field that so often assumes authority in mediating discourses of diversity, inclusion and exclusion.

The social science literature identifies multiple methods that researchers deploy when using imagery and photographs (Briski, 2005; Rose, 2001; Stanczak, 2007). These methods equally can be used with small or large numbers of participants and research sites, and typically engage singularly or in combination with approaches such as collecting images, creating images, constructing intertextual formats that embody image and text, narrative formats, video and performance texts. Perception and meaning can be understood as a product of psychological, physiological and cultural contexts (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p. 14). Beyond accounts of what disposes researchers to account for how form and content are produced, ‘our cultural history and trajectories naturalise certain values and ideas and effectively determine our worldview’ (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p. 14).

The next section of the chapter describes how I have gone about policy and curriculum research across two different sites and problems over the past decade. I highlight how schools are cultural sites and thus when represented through image are windows to ‘selection, omission and frame; signification and evaluation; arrangement; differentiation and connection; focus and context’ (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p. 21).

**The middle-school project**

The middle-school study sought to identify issues significant to the development of teacher education programmes and the middle years of schooling. The middle
years of schooling refer to a period of schooling between years 5 and 9, well known as a time for young people to disengage with schooling. Working with a fellow teacher-educator, I designed a study that required re-engagement with the classroom experientially, an opportunity to confront our understanding and perceived deficits of our work and the practice of teacher education curriculum development. We looked to the teaching profession to stage our being in the classroom, rather than out of the classroom, giving us the political and cultural opportunities to reach for differing identities as teacher-educators. Looking beyond restrictive practices set up by binary oppositions of teacher-educators as being in/out of the classroom and in/out of date, we were confronting our exclusion from the realm of practice and our professional identity. In our roles within a university Faculty of Education, we were spending too little time in direct teaching roles in schools and we wanted to redress this imbalance. Prior to our university appointments, our identity formation included two decades of continuous service to the teaching profession.

In the middle-school project the images were produced by student researchers. The PowerPoint assemblage was a part of the data produced through a critical ethnographic study. The students shot, selected and assembled the images into a PowerPoint show, which they publicly exhibited to their peers. These data and the act of producing the moving imagery proved to be, and still are, the most powerful and transferable element of the research study. Our Tasmanian graduate teacher education programme commenced in 1997 and was one of the early two-year postgraduate programmes developed in Australia. We knew first hand the limitations of our programme, and elsewhere have written an account of the difficulties of implementing other ways of working when resourcing is small and the operational demands privileged (Moss, Fearnely-Sander & Hiller, 2001).

The data production in the middle-school project derived from an authentic and rich perspective, and was informed by a longstanding knowledge of Tasmanian government education. I had taught in neighbouring schools a decade earlier, and had prior knowledge of the demographic and social issues that confronted teachers in this context. Our focus was around the questions what to teach, and how to teach a pre-service teacher education programme broadly. In particular, we wanted to make reference to the middle years of schooling and the Tasmanian context where the local Department of Education was in the first year of a community-based curriculum consultation process that led to the values and purposes statements, the curriculum design platform of the Essential Learnings (Department of Education Tasmania, 2000) curriculum.

In order to achieve our research aims, we entered the school in the manner that any of our pre-service teachers would, joining a school staff for the practicum experience. We found ourselves taking responsibility for teaching a Grade 7 class in a school that was beginning to implement a middle-school programme. We wanted to explore how our students’ preparation as pre-service teachers might be reinforcing or perpetuating practices that served to alienate the
next generation of teachers we were trying to engage. Our teaching time was restricted to the 'core' periods of English, Studies of the Society and the Environment (SOSE) and Maths, due to the pressure of our university commitments. The teaching load was, however, that of a practicum period, a 0.8 teaching load. We had wanted a nine-week period in the school as our internship, but instead we had to opt for a shorter four-week period as the research funds granted were halved. Interestingly, it was the university teaching relief that was reduced in our budget. At the end of each teaching session at the school, a research assistant debriefed us and our narratives were recorded and transcribed.

The interview data formed the first layer of the research narrative describing our experiences in the culture of an emerging middle school. As teacher/researchers we also had our field notes, lesson planning documentation and samples of student work. Each of us developed a portfolio of work with our Grade 7 students. The portfolios were developed around the rich task we developed as classroom teachers with our two classes of Grade 7 students. My class also developed a visual narrative of school life as understood by them. The thirty-nine digitised images were entered into a PowerPoint presentation and captioned by the students. Other narrative accounts obtained through recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed and entered into NVIVO. These narratives were contributed by a pre-service intern, a recent graduate of our programme, a teacher with nine years' experience (also a graduate of our institution), a support teacher and the school principal. Transcribed interviews were offered to the key informants for verification. One participant elected not to have the interview recorded, but instead gave permission for the research assistant to record field notes. The transcript narratives were then bound into a single volume for each teacher/researcher to analyse, whilst the research assistant produced the NVIVO conceptual mapping of the data.

NVIVO is highly suitable for small-scale projects such as ours which produced data from semi-structured interviews, school documents, newsletters, policy statements, student work samples and visual imagery. The research assistant coded segments of text, and recalled these segments later to analyse specific instances of situations as well as to cross-reference data from one coded segment to another. Data were left in single node form, leaving them readily available for further interrogation. These nodes are reflected back not as categories for reduction but as ways to interrogate how each of us makes sense of our situation, our views and actions and our particular stance. This method matched the phased nature of our encounters with the data. Times for carrying out the project are defined through our institutional contexts. Research waits until teaching is finished, and school personnel also are subject to organisational demands and cycles – for example, the school principal who supported our entry into the school was on long-service leave during the first school term of 2002, the term following the completion of the data production period.

Collaboratively we examined the research assistant’s coding and interpretation and re-read this against their interpretations. The first analysis included scrutiny of the transcribed narratives of the two teacher educators, the pre-
service intern, the recent graduate, the experienced teacher, the support teacher, the school principal and the visual imagery produced by one Grade 7 class. Student work samples were excluded at this first stage of the analysis. These data, we believed, would be particularly useful in exemplifying the pedagogical dimension of the research.

Our efforts, despite the limitations of a compromised time-frame are intended to live out and signal the importance of the research tensions acknowledged and urged by Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998). In their review and critique of ninety-three empirical studies on learning to teach, they urge research in teacher education to be characterised by researchers who

reflect on their research and openly comment on the implications and possible conflicts created by instructors and researchers ... [and] applaud these researchers for explicitly acknowledging the dilemmas that face those who do research with the subjects they teach.

(Wideen et al., p. 163)
Each of us would concur that this was probably the most professionally rich experience of our years to date in teacher education.

Reviewing this study five years on, and the student data, I concur with these initial thoughts, particularly the place and significance of the visual narrative produced by the student researchers. This study could have been completed without the student data, but it has been the reflection back of this data that I have used over and over in teacher education and presentations to school leaders that has provided the epistemological nudge to see the social context of schooling as integral to curriculum development, school change and the design of pre-service teacher education.

This study used the visual as one of the multiple data sources, and adds to the debate in the field of visual methods whether the visual should be treated as the primary object of analysis or as one of the available methods that can be used to study our social and cultural worlds. In this study the visual afforded us an opportunity to analyse the middle-years students' perspective, to build insights into how they understood their experience of schooling. Their visual analysis of the context of learning proved not only to be an important link to the curriculum work we were teaching and developing during the period, but also provided a place for us as teacher-educators to confront the absences of student bodies in this particular story of schooling. The photographic lens, through the eyes of middle-years students, was recording a set of cultural rules and practices. Schooling was symbolised through empty open spaces, locked rooms with an isolated desk and chair, sites for pleasure and consumption. Detached, regulated student identities that applaud the canteen, the visual art, music and technology rooms get photographed. Places that support pleasure, conversations, the arts and bodily engagement through sport are on offer as sites where worthwhile student trajectories appear. The bodily presence of students was invisible but very visible behind the lens as they selected, arranged, framed connections and disconnections to their context of schooling.

My account of the second study, a policy study of inclusive schooling follows. Through an image-based research design, the study offers a productive alternative for researchers who aim to disrupt the dichotomous other of inclusion/exclusion.

**Researching inclusive schooling policy in Tasmania**

The second policy study began as my PhD research and remains an ongoing pre-occupation. The PhD research was designed and developed in response to the events that have occurred in Tasmanian schools since the implementation of the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities (ISDP) Policy. Between 1994 and 1998, the ISDP was drafted, released and implemented. The research design draws on narratives from the key informants, parents, teachers and policymakers to tell the tales of the ‘story series’. Between the stories are visual intertexts. The ‘eye’ of the camera, adds another data source. Using visual narrative, the cultural
world of schools becomes a powerful semiotic source from which data could be produced. In the PhD thesis, these disparate data texts are used to unsettle social knowledge about inclusive schooling and open up possibilities for further analysis. The ‘story series’, the data stories of the key informants and the inclusion of my research narrative and the movement backwards and forwards between these texts and visual intertexts were developed and fingerprinted by myself as the researcher. The photographs from the traditions of photojournalism narrate a visual text of the sociocultural, professional and systemic world of the key informants, teachers, parents and policymakers.

Broadly, the research consists of story-telling that uses two distinct forms of texts, the literary and visual. This is a demonstration of the linguistic and sociological traditions intermixing with each other. In the thesis, these visual texts are referred to as image-based texts and occupy a space that I have named after Lather and Smithies (1997, p. 47) as ‘intertexts’. Sometimes these two types of narrative forms are entangled by other story lines. Sometimes I am a participant, at other times I am an observer, sometimes I am both of these. Within the thesis, sometimes the narratives merge, at other points there is a deliberate separation by the intertexts. The image intertexts are part of the cultural tradition of the special education knowledge tradition, a representation of schooling for students with disabilities from 1967 to 1998.

All in all, this text is a part of the ‘narrative turn’ and ‘textual turn ... literary and cultural studies that now tend to be labelled postmodernist and poststructuralist’ (Gough, 1998, pp. 59–60). Intentionally located at the entry of the data production, for those of us who can see, the combination of image and text constitutes, as Chaplin (1994, p. 3) endorses, one of the most effective means of communication. This conscious use of visual texts arises in my own narrative through an initial schooling in the visual arts as a secondary-school art teacher.

The insertion of a second narrative form, the visual, has two purposes. The first is to suggest that image-based research is a significant but under-utilised methodology in educational research. The second is to show, through the gradual threading of visual storylines into the thesis text, how image-based texts work as a powerful data source in research that focuses on social change. Also, what I am arguing is that image and text are not in opposition to each other. Texts are constructions through which we recognise and mis-recognise. Mitchell (2005, p. 351) writes of ‘the visual construction of the textual field’, rather than the ‘social construction of the visual field’ (2005, p. 351). Image in the contemporary study of culture is not heralded as iconoclastic; visual culture and visual images are, as Mitchell states, ‘“go betweens” in social transactions, as a repertoire of screen images or templates that structure our encounters with human beings’ (Mitchell, 2005, p. 351).

The interactions between image, voice and text, I also finally recognised, were what St Pierre describes as ‘response data’ (St Pierre, 1998, p. 4). Through the threading of response and narrative, images, split texts of researcher and informant working on a single page, layering one story with another,
foregrounding the exquisite proliferation of subjectivity that was enacted before my very eyes as my participants both constructed themselves and were also being constructed within responsive relationships’ (St Pierre, 1998, p. 4), this was a woven research method. Visual intertexts constructing the social history of schooling for students with disabilities interrupted the available narratives. The visual intertexts in my study are used to recount the available history within Tasmania and to draw other ways of problematising and reconceptualising the discourse and practice from the work described as inclusive schooling.

The use of photographs as historical method and texts aiming for social change is not a new phenomenon in the disability field. In 1966, Burton Blatt, and Fred Kaplan published *Christmas in Purgatory: A photographic essay*. In this visual text Blatt and Kaplan captured the life of thousands of intellectually disabled children and adults who were institutionalised (Christensen & Rizvi, 1996, p. 1). This work brought attention to the wider injustices experienced by

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Parent voice 23rd August 1996

My son has significant global developmental delay, complicated by poor muscle tone and fluctuating hearing loss. His language delay is severe, and he has a moderate intellectual disability. The cause for all of this is unknown. He receives six hours aide time, and is at kindergarten for ten hours each week. He sees the district speech therapist once a month – illness, excursions and strikes permitting. We are a family with a commitment to the state school system, and have worked hard to support our state schools. I have always been firm believer in equity, social justice and giving people a fair go. Had the inclusion policy not been in place, I would have actively worked for it. One of the questions I am most suspicious of is ‘Wouldn’t your son be much better off in a special school?’

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Figure 4.2 Educational facilities in Tasmania (a) for ‘handicapped’ children, 1967; (b) for children with special needs, 1973; (c) Parent voice, 1996; (d) Inclusive schooling, 1998.
people and children with disabilities, at a time when students with disabilities were excluded from the right to participate in normal educative processes.

I am currently researching the decade following the first phase of the policy implementation beyond 1998, that was the site of the original study. Much has occurred in Tasmania during the ensuing decade; there has been another major policy review, the Atelier Report (Essential Learnings for All, 2004) and a Ministerial statement on ‘refining’ the curriculum (Department of Education, 2006). This statement in essence signalled the end of Essential Learnings as they were initially conceived. In 2006, the state of Tasmania had a small number of separate special schools with a significantly reduced number of students. Compared to 900 at the beginning of the 1990s (Moss, 1999, p. 175), now just 132 students attended segregated settings. This endpoint, however, is not without its challenges, as my continuing research indicates, but demonstrates that one system radically altered its system of delivery.

Mitchell (2005) argues that the ‘life of images is not a private or individual matter. It is a social life … They [images] form a social collective that has a parallel existence to the social life of their human hosts, and to the worlds they represent’ (p. 93). Thus there is much to be gained by developing research designs that are longitudinal in nature – one of my aims in continuing policy research informed by visual method into the first decade of the twenty-first century.

**Intertextuality and policy research**

I argue, through the visual and ‘text’ work set out in the chapter, that visual forms developed from pixels and images are important sources of knowing that can contribute to reviewing policy and curricula aimed to achieve inclusive and socially just learning contexts. For the reader, images are displayed to elaborate the complications of what it is that is going on in classrooms, confronting how we understand school communities claiming to honour diversity and disability.

Theorising inclusive schooling has in recent times begun to link with broader theories of schooling and cultural politics. How unequal relationships in research practices remain hidden and obscured are questions that ‘researchers’ of inclusive schooling cannot ignore. Whilst some recognition of these issues has appeared over the past decade and some examples of changed practices have evolved, recognition of the centrality of these issues I assert is not central to the theorising of inclusive schooling, as Reid and Knight (2006) have also noted. Through questioning the meanings of appearances, borders of essentialist traditions can be reframed. Interactive and dialogical methods supported by the pixels of visual forms displace panoptical systems and invite the participation of the subject in a range of discursive practices – the sociocultural, the political and historical.

My research practices in both studies attempt to break apart the normative assumptions of policy that pervade the rapid advance of the inclusive schooling discourses. ‘Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted
as what is intended ... (p)olicy as practice is “created” in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom’ (Ball, 1994, pp. 10–11). Positioning policy within this methodological frame, policy becomes an ongoing intertextual process, bringing into view the social relations in which ‘texts’ are embedded. Visual methods, like a picture are ‘a very peculiar and paradoxical creature, both concrete and abstract, both a specific individual thing and a symbolic form that embraces a totality ... For whatever that picture is ... we are ourselves in it’ (Mitchell, 2005, p. xvii). Positioning image as a key data source and using methods that radically rather than incrementally displace the dominant role of the researcher would seem to be an important aim for educational researchers interested in disrupting either/or categories.

Part of my interest in understanding visuality in policy and curriculum inquiry is to signal that these fields and methods alert us to the importance of carefully analysing the paradigm possibilities and interpretive tools that over the past two decades have been taken up in the social sciences. I have long struggled with the limitations of the dominant orientation of research traditions that, despite their judgment by the academic community as having integrity and quality, are rarely taken up on the inside of schools by practising teachers and leaders. International contributions to curriculum and pedagogy are predominantly theory-laden; teachers rarely locate and translate research-based knowledge to inform their pedagogy (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992; Huberman, 1985; Richardson & Placier, 2001). It is recognised that educators are not translating research into classroom practice (Kennedy, 1999; Langemann, 1996; Raths & McAninch, 1999). Educational research has too little influence on improving classroom teaching and learning. As Hiebert, Gallimore and Stigler (2002), comment:

In spite of the continuing efforts of researchers, archived research knowledge has had little effect on the improvement of practice in the average classroom ... As teachers begin to examine their students’ learning of the curriculum, for example, they rarely search the research archives to help them interpret their students’ conceptions and misconceptions, plot their students’ learning trajectories, or devise alternative teaching practices that are more effective in helping their students master the curriculum...

(Hiebert et al., 2002, p. 3)

Researchers who aim to take on approaches that include the voice of others and build practices where students get involved as student researchers or co-researchers, however, need to be reminded of the potential limitations in these approaches unless there is an informed and reflexive researcher at work. Lather, citing Ellsworth notes the inherent dangers of liberatory attempts that reproduce themselves; ‘How do our very efforts to liberate perpetuate the relations of dominance?’ (Lather, 1991, p. 16).

What I am illustrating and arguing in this chapter is that if we are to under-
stand more deeply the multiple realities that construct schooling and shape educational opportunity, visual method has unrealised methodological potential, particularly as time and space compression invade social contexts. Rapid technological and social change have coincided with the growth of the interdisciplinary fields such as critical race theory, disability studies, queer theory and identity politics more broadly. ‘Students’ as a category or as subjects are placed within differing constructs or stage of development identity. As Baker notes and questions - ‘[if] “ability” and “disability” collapse under the contradictions inherent to their relationship in the text (where a text can be anything from a classroom to a test), then how can a pathway of normal development ever be described?’ (Baker, 1999, p. 825).

My cautionary tale when working from localised practices is that we must remain sharply cognisant of the explanatory power that paradigms have and hold over our research. Images are not innocent practices. Their production must be questioned. Images are not simply realist tales that ‘other’ research subjects. If we are to take up the possibilities, researchers will need to engage with the politics of representation, not the least being their epistemological position as knowledges morph rapidly.

Visual methods introduce the spectacle of the classroom and catapult realist policy forms. If image is a trap for our gaze, and knowledge of representations from visual sources is the now, a methodology of the visual will be how education researchers can view and review representations of subjects and selves held by policy formations. In our global world, how is education repressive? Visual methods developed in collaboration with our research participants have the potential to shake the authority and authorial canon of research production. The continuous presence of subjects and discursive inter-relationships produced both in a time and over time are inherent to the practice of visual culture.

Changing cultures of schooling requires us to undo an entrenched material and social reality. Lessons learned from visual culture affirm the central place of subjectivities (Doy, 2005) and the means to analyse image. As education researchers, we need to pay closer attention to the field and spaces that visual culture generates.

Notes
1 NVIVO details are available at http://www.qsrinternational.com/.
2 ‘morph(3) (transitive and intransitive verb) morph [mawrf] 1. transform from one image to another to transform one graphic image on screen into another or others, through the use of sophisticated computer software, or to be transformed in this way 2. transform quickly to cause something to change its outward appearance completely and instantaneously, or to undergo this process’ Encarta Dictionary: English (UK) (accessed online 2 January 2007).
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