

Call for Papers for the online journal, Educational Research for Social Change

“Not just an object”: Making meaning of and from everyday objects in educational research for social change

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When we consider “the interpretive possibilities of objects, documents, and things . . . we can situate the thing or object within broader societal questions” (Mitchell, 2011, p. 49).

How do we get at the meanings of everyday (and not so everyday) objects and how might their meanings have significance for broader social questions if as Shanks (1998) explains, “the [object] is *itself* a multiplicity, its identity is multiple” (p. 24)? The study of material culture offers researchers diverse languages of, with, and about objects and visual representations of those objects (Nordstrom, 2013). In generating object narratives that simultaneously occupy the past, present and future we get to understand the “confused and confounded relationship between objects and subjects – both living and nonliving”, entangled and complex (Nordstrom, 2013, p. 238). Researching education through studying the meanings we attribute to objects defies binaries and linearities – to suggest that educational experience is open to new and different re-workings and re-visionings. As researchers mediating meanings of and from objects, “we are not apart from the trajectories of objects, subjects, culture, society, and discourse” (Nordstrom, 2013, p. 253). Working with objects locates us within those trajectories as we try to make sense of them with theories that allow us to see the entanglement and connections in between objects and lived experience (Nordstrom, 2013).

This special issue will bring together researchers from diverse contexts and multiple knowledge fields who share a commitment to educational research for social change. The issue will offer a shared space in which subjects and objects, living and nonliving, entangle to open up understandings of the connections made between objects and the “relationships which flow constantly between-across persons and things” (Nordstrom, 2013, p. 238). It will open up ways to rethink objects and subjects as interconnecting entities that can demonstrate the social meanings of daily lived experiences of education and the objects used in personal and professional lives (Pahl & Roswell, 2010; Turkle, 2007).

Authors are invited to submit articles that will exhibit and narrate visual representations in response to the question: “How do we get at [the] meanings of everyday (and not so everyday) objects and how might their meanings enrich our research for social change?” Each article will offer a unique object narrative. Taken as whole, the special issue will portray “a *message* about our [educational] life, an ensemble which will portray possible [educational] *messages*, of possibility and plurality” (Nordstrom, 2013, p. 252).

The themed issue will push the boundaries of what counts as evidence in research for social change to consider the educational possibilities of objects, situated within wide-ranging societal questions (Mitchell, 2011). It will raise debates about the potential of objects in generating social, historical and autobiographical narratives, with implications for social change.

REFERENCES

Mitchell, C. (2011). *Doing Visual Research*. London: Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Nordstrom, S. N. (2013). Object-interviews: Folding, unfolding, and refolding perceptions of objects. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12, 237-257. Retrieved from <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/16635>

Pahl, K., & Roswell, J. (2010). *Artifactual literacies: Every object tells a story*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Turkle, S. (Ed.). (2007). *Evocative objects: Things we think with*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Shanks, M. (1998). The life of an artifact in an interpretive archaeology. *Fennoscandia archaeologica*, 15, 15-42.

Deadlines

Abstracts (150–200 words) are due by 1 April 2018

Abstracts could address these elements:

- the focus and purpose of the educational research for social change
- the researcher/s and research context/s
- methodology / methods for working with objects
- most exciting / discoveries / implications for making meaning of and from objects in educational research for social change
- Invitations will be sent to selected authors: **1 May 2018**
- Full manuscripts: **1 August 2018**
- Feedback on reviews: **1 November 2018**
- Submission of reworked papers: **15 January 2019**
- Publication date: **April 2019**

Potential authors should consult the [Educational Research for Social Change information for authors](#) for style guide information

Contacts and further information

Abstracts, together with the article title, author names and contact details, should be submitted as an email attachment to: edjournal@nmmu.ac.za

Enquiries about the special issue theme can be sent to the guest editors: pillaygv@ukzn.ac.za; pithousemorgan@ukzn.ac.za; naickeri1@ukzn.ac.za

For an introduction to working with objects in educational research, potential authors might find it helpful to refer to the free online preview of the edited book, [Object Medleys: Interpretive Possibilities for Educational Research](#) (Sense Publishers, 2017)