QRE
Qualitative Research in Education
Hipatia Press
www.hipatiapress.com

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

http://qre.hipatiapress.com

Let Me Put It Another Way: Methodological Considerations on the Use of Participatory Photography Based on an Experiment with Teenagers in Secondary Schools

José M. Coronel Llamas, Iván Rodríguez Pascual[1]

1) Facultad de Educación, Universidad de Huelva, España.

Date of publication: June 28th, 2013

To cite this article: Coronel Lamas, J. M., & Rodríguez Pascual, I. (2013). Let Me Put It Another Way: Methodological Cconsiderations on the Use of Participatory Photography Based on an Experiment With Teenagers in Secondary Schools *Qualitative Research in Education, 2*(2), 98-129. doi: 10.4471/qre.2013.20

To link this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.4471/qre.2013.20

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to Creative Commons Non-Commercial and Non-Derivative License.

Qualitative Research in Education Vol.2 No.2 June 2013 pp. 98-129

Let Me Put It Another Way: Methodological Considerations on the Use of Participatory Photography Based on an Experience with Teenagers in Secondary Schools

José M. Coronel Llamas & Iván Rodríguez Pascual
Universidad de Huelva

Abstract

This article reflects on the use of participant photography as a methodological component of a qualitative research study into student intercultural relations in four secondary schools in Spain. Forty boys and girls took part and we selected over 400 photographs they had taken. The article draws attention to the importance of student 'voices' to show the interaction processes and the value of participatory photography as an approach that encourages their participation beyond the traditional interviews and field observations. The results acknowledge the value of photography to reflect the relationships among adolescents. However, while the experiment was positively rated by the participants, the study recognises the risks taken and the achievements, constraints, dilemmas and difficulties encountered by the investigators carrying out the research.

Keywords: visual methods, participatory photography, student voice, intercultural relations

2013 Hipatia Press
ISSN 2014-6418
DOI: 10.4471/qre.2013.20

Qualitative Research in Education Vol.2 No.2 June 2013 pp. 98-129

Déjame Que Te lo Diga de Otro Modo: Consideraciones Metodológicas sobre el Uso de la Fotografía Participativa a partir de una Experiencia con Adolescentes en Escuelas de Secundaria

José M. Coronel Llamas & Iván Rodríguez Pascual
Universidad de Huelva

Resumen

Este trabajo reconoce desde el punto de vista metodológico el empleo de la fotografía participante en un trabajo de investigación cualitativa que se adentra en las relaciones interculturales que tienen lugar en cuatro escuelas de enseñanza secundaria españolas. Un total de 40 chicos y chicas participaron y fueron seleccionadas alrededor de 400 fotografías tomadas por ellos/as. El trabajo pone la atención en la importancia de las voces de los y las estudiantes con la intención de mostrar el proceso de interacción y el papel de la fotografía participativa como un enfoque que promueve la participación de los estudiantes más allá de las entrevistas y observaciones de campo. Los resultados reconocen el valor de la fotografía para reflejar las relaciones entre los adolescentes. No obstante, siendo una experiencia valorada positivamente por los participantes, el estudio reconoce los riesgos asumidos así como los logros, limitaciones, dilemas y dificultades encontradas por los investigadores durante el desarrollo de la investigación.

Palabras claves: métodos visuales, fotografía participativa, voz de los estudiantes, relaciones interculturales

2013 Hipatia Press
ISS3 2014-6418
DOI: 10.4471/qre.2013.20

The 'visual' is a determining factor in the cultural construction of social life in contemporary societies. Since the invention of photography in the mid-nineteenth century, photographs have played an important role: our culture is becoming increasingly visual as well as more visually sophisticated. Visual images surround us and we use them almost daily. This visual culture reveals a web of socially constructed narratives which, taken altogether as a whole, make up a socially visible standardised identity (Haywood, 2007). Visual methods help document and represent the social world creatively, with a view to developing new ways of understanding individual and social relations and knowledge of social science per se (Banks, 1998; Becker, 1974; Collier and Collier, 1986; Pink, 2004; Rose, 2001).

Over the past few decades, there has been an explosion of participatory media projects around the world aiming to investigate how people contend with an array of social conditions and life challenges 'through their own eyes' (Luttrell and Chalfen, 2010). In education, health and public policy research the use of participatory visual methods with young people is usually linked to a desire to allow them a greater voice in the fields of research and professional activity that impact on their lives. Giving cameras or video cameras to young people is one way of asking for their story and their perspectives, and of producing artefacts or evidence that might carry that story powerfully in other contexts. But how that 'voice' is produced, whose voice it represents, and how the product of that research is used and interpreted are all contentious issues for researchers using participatory visual methods (Yates, 2010).

The practice of asking participants for an explanation of the visual images created has been a feature of social science research (Belin, 2005; Darbyshire et al., 2005; Luttrell and Chalfen, 2010; Morrow, 2001). Participant photography is a visual method in which research participants are encouraged to visually document their social landscapes and that places the power of photo documentation in the hands of research subjects (Packard, 2008). This method emphasises the active role of participants in creating and interpreting the photos they take when eliciting information for research purposes and stimulates self-reflection and interaction with others. Without becoming co-researchers, we wanted to give them the opportunity to portray and show the world

around them. Through the camera lens, we wanted the participants to focus on many aspects of their subjectivity differently, channelling their visions and ideas in alternative ways, becoming researchers and protagonists of their own culture, their own life.

The term voice, auto, or participatory are often used to indicate that the cameras have been placed in the hands of the people taking part, empowering them to document and reflect on social issues and cultural phenomena important to them (Luttrell, 2010; Packard, 2008). They have control of the camera in order to record their experience. This way, the camera provides a possibility of 'empowerment' (Luna, 2009) that few research situations can offer, and even more so if it can be used narratively to express the problems, desires and longings which almost always serve as generators of the images and which in turn semantically accompany the photograph. Participant photography thus has enormous possibilities as a tool to encourage people's participation in the research process and situates research subjects as co-collaborators in the knowledge creation process and provides the space and opportunity for people to reflect on issues concerning them.

Moreover, the use of visual data produced by the participants and discussed with them reveals more than what we might initially expect using an exclusively verbal approach to data gathering (Gauntlett 2007; Moss 2008). Our aim was to encourage a visual discourse arising freely and participatively from subjects who did not have to deal with the violently closed language of a questionnaire or the limited and supervised space of an interview, but the possibilities opened up by the image and its total control with minimal intervention from researchers.

Additionally, participatory visual research methods were developed as part of an explicit attempt to decrease the power differential between the researcher and the researched. It gives them time to reflect on their lives without the guidance of the intrusive voice of the researcher. In this way, the images and ideas are created without the researcher's influence. Methods designed to bring these relationships more into line with one another, ceding power to research participants, have served not only to create a more ethical research situation but also to generate new forms of knowledge which cannot be developed any other way. These experiences have the potential to challenge the hierarchical relationships between professionals and participants, enabling ordinary people to

research and represent their ideas. Thus, several methodological breakthroughs have successfully resulted in shifting the ethical agenda from one defined solely by the researcher to a more collaborative model. A popular formulation for mutual research practices is the call for adults to work with rather than working on, about or for children (Luttrell, 2010; Packard, 2008).

The ability of participant photography to illuminate cultural phenomena through visual documentation to provide nuanced understanding of cultural performances and ideological standpoints, to challenge the relationship between researchers and participants, speaks to its power and possibility as a qualitative method (Allen, 2012). In this sense, participatory photography is a popular tool among researchers, educators and other professionals, particularly those working with marginalised groups to promote social awareness and justice (Aldridge, 2012; Allen, 2012; DeJean, 2008; Guerrero and Tinkler, 2010; Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi, 2010; Narayan, 2000; Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen, 2005; Wang, Cash and Powers, 2000: Ziller, 1990).

As Killion (2001, 50) noted, "One simple photograph may contain thousands of references". Photos have the potential to stimulate ideas and raise questions. It must therefore be clear what kind of information we are looking for, which knowledge we want to produce and how we can incorporate these into the research (Farough, 2006; Goopy & Lloyd, 2005; Glover-Graf, 2000; Killion, 2001; Samuels, 2004). Recorded images can provide us with notions, ideas and theories that help us respond to the research questions. Through the use of visual methods we acknowledge that photographs are another way to access knowledge and theory and that they contribute to our understanding of the realities studied. Nevertheless, we must treat them with the same rigour as any other data collection method (Emmel & Clark, 2011).

Photographs are no more transparent than any other form of data, but they do present a different set of ethical, legal and moral concerns compared with spoken words (Luttrell, 2010). The literature lists the benefits of this workflow (e.g. Lykes, Blanche and Hamber, 2003; Mclntyre and Lykes, 2004), while acknowledging its risks, ethical dilemmas (Joanou, 2009; Packard, 2008; Smith, Gidlow and Steel, 2012; Wang and Redwood-Jones, 2001) and power dynamics (Prins, 2010).

In participatory photography and its variants such as "photovoice" (Wang, 1999) or photo elicitation (Harper, 2002) or auto-photography (Worth and Adair, 1972), people use the camera to represent their experiences and perspectives on a given topic.
his method invites participants to take photographs dealing with various aspects of their lives; the photos are later used in the interview process to explore the subjective meanings of the images collaboratively (Clark-Ibanez, 2004, Kolb, 2008). Then, they collectively discuss and analyse the photos and the participants create an outcome (album, report, murals…) to inform the community. Due to this attractive facet, photography has been used with children, youth and adults in various contexts, including education (Barndt, 2001; Gallo, 2001; Luttrell, 2006; McAllister, et. al, 2005; Spielman, 2001; Zenkov, Harmon and van Lier, 2008).

While it is important to establish the effectiveness of visual methods empirically, it is equally important to examine the limitations of these methods so that future researchers will not expect more than can realistically be delivered (Packard, 2008). In this sense, Prins (2010) observed that some (not all) studies (e.g. McAllister et al., 2005; Spielman, 2001) provide few details on the photographic process or have a somewhat romantic vision of the changes and transformations in the participants (Gallo, 2001). These reports tend to underestimate the risks and problems, perpetuating a binary system between 'silencing' and 'giving voice' (Lykes et al., 2003), and portray cameras (photos) as an acultural, intrinsically liberating technology that produces similar results in all kinds of contexts. But we must not forget that monitoring of the public through new technologies such as computer spyware, camera phones (Weiss, 2004) and social networks justifies a more critical attitude towards photography.

The Experience

Participants and Context

The experiment is framed in a qualitative research project into intercultural relations through participatory photography and online research with adolescents. In this sense, visual and virtual spaces of

student's representation are explored. Particularly, in this article we use participatory photography to reflect how teenagers from four Spanish secondary schools represent intercultural relations within the frame of the socio-educational interrelations taking place mainly, although not exclusively, in education centres. A total of 40 adolescents (25 boys and 15 girls) took part, with ages ranging from 13 to 16 (15 natives and 25 immigrants).

The article draws attention to the importance of student 'voices' in discourses of intercultural relations. We live in a social and historical moment in which adolescence is considered particularly problematic. The study treats adolescents away from the unified patterns of behaviour, inclined to show first of all absences and shortcomings from the point of view of development. The study also rejected overly pathologised discourse that portrays them as victims of consumerism and prone to rebellion and difficulties in adjusting to the demands of the school (Stevens et. al, 2007). Nevertheless, we opted for the involvement and role of the students as active participants in the research process. It is they who are best placed to provide the information needed and reflect their points of view on their relations and contacts.

Research with adolescents has been more inclined to regard them as "gatekeepers" of such policies or objects rather than subjects and protagonists of the same. Moreover, in most cases, research with students is still dominated by the development of quantitative methods to measure competence or cultural sensitivity, the degree of adjustment of the study population to the academic requirements of the school, the application of surveys of other groups of adolescents and the use of benchmarks, among others (Asanova, 2005; Carignan et. al, 2005; Codjoe, 2006; Ding and Hall, 2007; Giavrimis, Konstantinou, and Hatzichristou, 2003; Hammer, Bennet and Wiseman, 2003; Navas et. al, 2007; Planas, 2007; Verkuyten and Martinovic, 2006). We have a duty and a commitment to listen to their "missing voices"; their words, images and gestures. Adolescents can fruitfully move away from simply being the sources of data in projects implemented by others. Their opinions are relevant and having a greater say in their schooling is important for them and for the school (Thomson and Gunter, 2006). The

challenge is the democratisation of educational organisations through the lens of student engagement (Smith, 2008).

On the other hand, education centres are a privileged setting in which to observe and understand the process of interaction and coexistence among people in the cultural learning process (Gimeno, 2002). The school appears as the first and sometimes the only real area of coexistence for culturally different people, for several reasons: (a) opportunities arise for contact and friendships to develop; (b) in principle their status is similar (all are students); (c) students engage in educational and academic experiences that require cooperation to achieve common goals, and (d) the dynamics and activity generated by the educational institution. Along with this, we included the social settings (barrio, neighbourhood, home, street, etc.) where cultural diversity is experienced on a day to day basis.

The study was carried out in four Spanish secondary schools (two urban and two rural) located in Huelva province (Andalusia region). Located in the southwest of the country, the region has long been characterised by high unemployment rates and levels of economic and social development below the national average. Each school has different characteristics pertaining to the socio-economic situation, size, number of students and teachers and the diverse origins and traditions of immigrant students in terms of cultural diversity management. However, we can identify some similarities, such as:

1) The schools are located in cultural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas with low economic resources, limited employment opportunities, low educational attainment in the adult population and lack of facilities, services and resources

2) These schools continue to present substantial barriers to educational attainment and achievement. Moreover, over the last decade the progressive influx of immigrant populations in these areas has affected school composition, which has subsequently affected school outcomes.

3) Generally, the integration of families in the area is positive. However, their participation, involvement and collaboration in school activities is very low.

4) Even so, some schools facing these difficult and challenging circumstances are able to provide quality education and raise student achievement levels.

5) Schools have the resources, programmes and specific plans to work with students. Except for isolated cases, teens do not usually have good academic performance. In relation to the immigrant population, special actions are implemented by teachers with the support of other educational professionals.

6) Most of the students come from elementary school. They know their peer group and are fluent in Spanish. This facilitates the process of integration into school life and social context.

7) Adolescents have different paths in their acculturation process. Generally, they involve themselves in both their heritage culture and that of the national society (by way of integration), have the most positive psychological well-being, and are most adjusted in school and in the community.

Procedure and Analysis

But why photography? What advantages may we achieve from photography? Can we obtain the same or different information through other procedures used, such as observations and conversations with them? Could the photographs taken serve to further our knowledge of social relationships and intercultural contact? How will the teenagers interpret the proposal? Which ethical considerations should we take into account as of this point? Will they return the cameras once the work is completed? Numerous questions arose as soon as we took the decision to use participatory photography.

The work was divided into 4 phases:

a) *Informative*: Permission to carry out the experience was requested from the school management, families and students themselves. According to Wiles et al., (2008) the primary ethical issues associated with visual research methods arise as a result of the production of images that depict identifiable (or potentially identifiable) people. Thus, researchers must carefully consider the ways in which they might present their findings in monographs, theses, journals, magazines and newspapers, and whether or not they will reproduce participants'

photographs (Smith, Gidlow and Steel, 2012). The principal of each school informed the faculty of the purpose; the students' families signed a document authorising their children's participation and we called on students participating in other phases of the research on a voluntary basis and briefly explained the nature of the activity to be performed. It must be emphasised that once the decision was taken to include the teenagers, we were surprised by the enthusiasm with which they accepted the idea of taking photos about their relationships and their willingness to take part in the activity proposed. Only one of them decided not to participate. Nevertheless, we were still concerned and slightly unsure about the way the process would develop.

So, we obtained consent to carry out the experiment and the use of photographs due to the large number of photographs depicting people. Nonetheless, protecting visual identities presented a signifi¬cant ethical challenge. Another ethical consideration has to do with the use of images depicting other people who had not consented to be in the study. On one hand, the photographs were 'private', inasmuch as they were intended for the participant's own personal use. However, they were also intended for research purposes (Smith, Gidlow and Steel, 2012). Students were advised of this fact for their consideration when taking pictures. In any case, we informed all parties that easily recognised faces in the images would be pixellated prior to inclusion in any publication. Another important ethical consideration refers to the privacy of students participating in research. There are no words. They are pictures, images, visual representations of social situations, interactions and contacts between young people. In this sense, we informed the adolescents that the photos used for research purposes would be the ones they selected. In any case, ethical deliberation must be present at all times, as it is very difficult to ensure the privacy and complete anonymity of publisher participant visual images.

b) *Explanatory*: We set up a Photography Workshop. Students were given a series of technical instructions on taking photos and on the subject: portraying intercultural relations. We encouraged them to become 'reporters of themselves'. We gave each student a camera and arranged to meet up within a week, after they had taken photos on the subject. They asked about places where photos could be taken. We reminded them that since they had the camera over the weekend, in

addition to the school itself they could photograph other spaces they considered valid to reflect social interaction. In any case, we cannot forget that an unequal power dynamic is immediately and irrevocably established the moment the researcher has to instruct a participant on how to operate a piece of equipment (Packard, 2008). We insisted that they should take the photos trying to reflect their own points of view on their relationships and not as an investigative tool at the service of the researchers. In this explanatory phase, we continued to wrestle with the dilemma of whether we should fully explain the purpose of the research or maintain a degree of generality in the instructions that might allow for a greater level of interpretation by the participants. Finally, we decided not to give too much explanation to avoid the risk of coming up with photographic material not related with the aims of the research, which in the end is what occurred.

c) *Fieldwork*: Students took photos during the agreed seven-day period. Over 1300 photographs were collected. After ruling out those which were impossible to analyse (dark, blurry, reading errors, etc) and those which could be analysed but contained only partial or insignificant images or accidental shots, a sample was put together of 418 photos which would be the final candidates for analysis. The students then chose five photographs from the total taken and selected.

d) *Discussion*: Participatory photography emphasises the active role of participants in creating and interpreting the photos they take when eliciting information for research purposes and stimulates self-reflection and interaction with others. The selected photographs were discussed in a group sessions. The students gave a title to each photo selected. With the researcher acting as moderator, they commented on the experiment and filed in a registration sheet with their age, gender, country of birth and their rating of the experience.

Regarding the analysis process, we agree with Knoblauch, et al., (2008), who pointed out that whereas qualitative analyses of videos have developed some kind of shared methodological principles, the variety of analyses of photography is so vast that the task of unification is still pending. In our case, we employed a simple quantitative analysis by encoding the photos in a data matrix created and operated with the SPSS statistical package. Likewise, we carried out a qualitative analysis in which the image was interpreted as part of a socially produced

discourse. The encoding process followed the selective-theoretical open coding sequence (Glaser 1998), as this sequence enabled us to transfer the data item or incident to a code and then establish a concept. Logically, different codifiers could have produced a slightly different selection process, and we assumed that the image is an expressive datum but difficult to classify objectively. Moreover, a photograph can be interpreted in many ways. This can be assessed in a positive way in the sense of obtaining multiple meanings. So, while the meaning the photographer ascribes to a photo has no epistemological primacy over other visions, we should acknowledge that all interpretations are ontologically dependent upon the photographer's moment of engagement with a subject (Grady 2008). Even so, we understand that the result, as we try to show below, is extremely rich and helps us better understand the students' intercultural relations and social interactions.

Results

Pictures, Social Situations, Intercultural Relations and Other Issues

A total of 418 photos were analysed from 40 photographers and four different secondary schools. We found a visual discourse consists of several interlocking themes and patterns of representation arose during the encoding process. Adolescents reflects in their pictures what Erving Goffman calls shared 'idioms of posture, position, and glances' that express how people 'wordlessly choreograph [themselves] relative to others in social situations' (Goffman 1979, p. 21). Similarly, and in line with Yates (2010, p. 283), the pictures represent both the experiences (windows on the world) and subjectivity (windows to identity) of the participants. 'Windows to the world' projects do recognise that photograph-taking involves perspectives and selectivity by the photographer, but their central interest is to get new knowledge about the world out there as experienced by the participants. 'Windows to identity' projects, on the other hand, are interested in the photographs primarily as a means of accessing the inner life and perspectives of the participants.

An initial analysis focusing on the descriptive category of the photo reveals that we are dealing with a discourse clearly centred around two poles which are essentially simply extremes of a continuum that fully covers the individual and his/her self under construction. On one hand, we are referring to the self-portrait and on the other the portrait of peer groups and companions among which the subjects taking part in this research were integrated. Specifically, 16% of the 400 photographs studied were self-portraits, and approximately 17% were individual portraits of peers. The largest photograph category, however, was the group portrait (usually in a classroom setting, but also common in parks and streets), taking in more than 38% of the photos (See table below).

Table 1
Photograph categories

Type	%
Group portrair	38.3
Peer portrair	17.5
Self-portrair	16
Clasroom/School life	5,5
Other spaces	3,6
Other themes	19.1
Total	100

Group Portraits

First of all, there was a massive presence of group portraits in the discourse. Images depicting groups of students (many of males only) posing in the classroom, in corridors or in areas outside the school. The photos taken in corridors and common spaces, as well as those taken in the streets or parks, specifically reinforce the idea of posing. Boys and girls feel particularly comfortable and free in spaces not under adult supervision, and this includes their own bedrooms. The subjective logic that these images seem to reveal reinforces the group discourse; the union of generational peers, with shared feelings of passing through a common space and time. In the portraits of groups of students, only on rare occasions are the subjects not approaching each other, or hugging

or linking arms. Sometimes, the emotional expression in the photos can be read ambiguously, as almost defiant. The boys grip each other tightly by the neck, as though each had his fellow prisoner. The girls portray themselves with their faces so close together that it is as if they were about to kiss and the picture had frozen the kiss a split second before. In these portraits it is very common to find a mix of nationals and non-nationals. This proximity and embracing seem to mean several things: we need each other, we are exclusively partners, and we do not need anything or anybody else; a typical teen gesture, claiming sovereignty for oneself in the peer context.

Figure 1. Group/Peer portraits

Self –portraits

At such an important time of construction of self and personal growth as adolescence, self-portraits deserve special attention. Although the idea was to depict social interaction, relations and contacts, the adolescents preferred to photograph themselves. Self-portraits constitute a significant group of photographs, although not a majority, which is more likely to occur among the foreign student body. Usually the camera is held at arm's length or the snapshot is taken in front of a mirror. These self-portraits in the mirror are of a wholly digital nature and it is hard to find any not identical to those that adorn many of the albums these boys and girls keep on sites like Tuenti or Facebook, two of the most popular social networks among this peer group. There can be no doubt that they are a narcissistic gesture in the literal, non-pejorative sense, the act of a self-observing individual who enjoys seeing him/herself as a product of their own making. Self-portraits do not exclude the pose, or clothing or accessories worn by the character. They are a portrait, not of the figure, but of the person and their circumstances, calling for this kind of generational props, including not only clothing but also gestures and postures. As suggested above, they also commonly reflect gender differences, which although not invented in adolescence, are evidently accentuated and redefined on the threshold of social maturity. The boys tend to prefer defiant stances, bare chested, hands in pockets or looking serious and, up to a certain point, challenging. The girls accentuate what they consider essential features of their femininity: posing with hands on hips, leaning, lips pursed. The self-portrait shows adolescence in all its splendour, asking itself each morning who it is and, what is most important, who it would like to be.

Gestures

Reference must be made, inevitably, to the dispersed but significant gestural repertoire we find in our sample photos. The discourse of gestures, i.e. what gestures appear to say or point out (never better said), is fully consistent with the idea we put forward earlier. The photography of these subjects, beyond their different nationalities, is an assertion of

themselves as a generational collective as well as a gestures, i.e. what gestures appear to say or point out (never better said), is fully consistent with the idea we put forward earlier. The photography of these subjects, beyond their different nationalities, is an assertion of themselves as a generational collective as well as a vindication of peer support. In this sense, the gestuality clearly refers to the support of the group, with hugs and gestures of dubious significance (defiance, shared rituals, supposedly secret signs or mere accessory gestures, embellishments of the pose?) but which make sense only as manifestations of a peer culture, as they also usually take place in the group portraits. Above all, they use their hands and fingers, sometimes making the victory sign, others pointing and on many other occasions marking body areas or placing them beside the face in a gesture similar to that we make when imitating a telephone call with a hand.

The range of gestures recorded in our sample was very expressive. The most common were hand and finger gestures (pointing, making the victory sign etc.) appearing in 11.7 % of the pictures, followed by hugs (9,8%) and having arms crossed or akimbo (3,6%). Less frequently found gestures were manifestations of kissing, sticking out the tongue, hands in pockets or covering the face, among others. However, over half of all photographs portraying people did not show any significant gestures. We believe that the gesture bears a clear relationship with their drive to construct themselves as a generation, which is why it is much more abundant in group portraits, where gestures have shared meanings that are difficult to understand outside the context of peer culture. In the case of hand gestuality, the value of the gesture as a shared sign is clearly appreciable, part of a juvenile code which, if unknown, may end up simply puzzling the researcher. The arms, which in many pictures hang beside the body and lack prominence, at other times are crossed to signify resistance or strength, or placed in jars. The tongue is shown or hands are used to cover the face. The gestural language merits a deeper analysis.

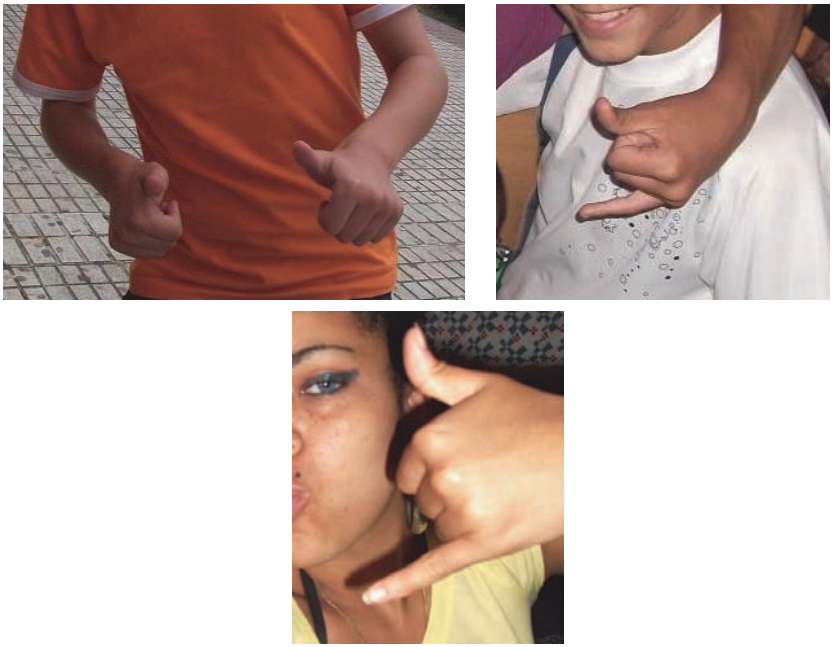

Figure 2. The gesture

Posture

Some 27% of the photographs were coded as "natural". This meant that there was no clearly discernible conscious attitude of posing for the camera in the people portrayed. In line with the importance of the personal construction process that characterises adolescence and that previously mentioned regarding its presence in the photographic discourse of the students participating in the research, most of these pictures involved some kind of "pose" (approximately 61%). Stances ranged from simply being photographed looking at the camera to the most sophisticated composition, involving tilting the body or making hand gestures, putting faces together, pointing at the photographer, etc. It seems obvious that young people's interest in defining themselves and the presentation of their identity underlies this tendency to pose. Posing is to some extent "natural", if we allow the oxymoron, insofar as it is practiced for peers or oneself (as in self-portraits) and not

"contaminated" by the expectations of correction or formality that might be attributed to an adult gaze.

It was relatively surprising to find a very small number of photos showing subjects smoking or drinking alcohol either in entertainment or in private spaces. In the case of tobacco it is usually girls that appear. It is possible that, although we know that the starting age for consumption of these and other substances is relatively early and their use is not a minority activity in boys and girls of this age, the authors did not deem them remarkable elements worthy of prominence in photos. At the end of the day, they are a manifestation of the world seen by a group of teenagers and are not necessarily those that would have come up if we ourselves had been the photographers. We might also, of course, venture the hypothesis that knowing the transgressive nature of drug consumption (legal or otherwise) in our society, the individuals sought to minimise their presence in their reportages.

Figure 3. Posing

Scenarios

With respect to the context where the interactions take place as portrayed by our informants, the overwhelming prevalence of spaces belonging to the school itself should be noted, although the cameras were available both during school hours and leisure or family time. Pictures taken in school corridors, common areas, tracks and classrooms totalled more than 40% of all photographs analysed. It cannot be ruled out that, although the adolescents move in a space institutionalised and structured by adult standards, it has ended up becoming (partly through

the mere habit of use, partly because there is some re-appropriation of the same) the preferred daily setting of these boys and girls. The next most privileged space was the street (18,4%), which is also undergoing a juvenile reappropriation process followed by bedrooms and other domestic spaces (20,6%).

Natural surroundings and urban space were also featured, and there was a minority, albeit significant, of views and landscapes. In another gesture that is almost an intrinsic element of adolescence itself, the subjects, by way of photographic composition, seem to have taken over a public space. This gesture links the photo with public binge drinking and the taking over of squares, corners and doorways, forcibly transformed from mundane public places into haven and home to entire generations. As compositional detail, we should add that the photographic discourse, as it emerged through the cameras of our young photographers, ends up providing a portrait in which the peers are again protagonists.

Figure 4. Other Scenarios

Other issues

Having the camera all week, with absolute control over it, may lead to outcomes unforeseen or unrelated to the research objectives. Despite the instructions given regarding the aims of the work, we had to assume the risk and uncertainty about what they might do with the cameras. In this sense, the results of the experiment bring us closer to other issues considered by the teenagers while reflecting their relations and intercultural contact. Thus, for both nationals and foreigners, clothing and other related objects, as elements reinforcing an identity and lifestyle, with a symbolic weight that goes beyond simple adornment, were also naturally reflected in the photographs. The most notable were sports shoes, caps, shirts with symbols, badges or pictures representing certain youth cultures. Foreign students clearly appeared most often displaying garments and objects with symbolic reference (a Barcelona shirt, for example, which could be a reference to the host society, a sports club, an autonomous region or some global idea that only responds to the logic of sports marketing). Sports outfits are also preferentially represented by males, who often like to portray themselves doing sports or dressed for this purpose.

On the other hand, although the patterns detected in the iconographic material analysed did not differ significantly between domestic and foreign students, in some particular sections there are discernible differences. Thus, certain cultural traits, which may be acting as a link between source and host societies, are indeed more present in some pictures by foreign boys and girls. This applies to food, for example, or even images reminiscent of other photos depicting places of origin. Likewise, the foreign students took self-portraits to a greater extent than the nationals. It is also common to find foreign boys and girls portrayed with their homes and family, perhaps because they are signs of attachment, in the case of homes, but also because the families in many cases where the immigration project originated constitute a no man's land, the threshold which reconciles (but also protects from) the new and strange and the culture of origin, the native, with the host world, which is happening just outside the door.

Figure 5. Other themes

In short, this analysis linked with the connotative, free representation produced by the subjects themselves (reporters of their own lives, as they were told) reveals an adolescent concerned with definition of a self in the group context and where social interactions and contacts primarily - although not uniquely - take place in the schools. On the other hand, the photographs do not reflect any conflicting elements arising from the interactions and contacts between the immigrant and native populations.

In many ways, the photos suggest a representation of the world very close to that of any national minor, where the presence of peer group friendship and culture is the basic support upon which the self is built and the future adult world rests. In several photos, it is impossible to distinguish the foreign students from their domestic peers and there are

photos which perhaps explicitly represent the possibility of intercultural coexistence and the existence of mixed couples. In this sense, apart from some minor exceptions, the discourses of both groups clearly coincide. These results did not show up any significant differences in visual discourse between the native and immigrant populations. It is possible that what these pictures show is that the issue of multiculturalism is not so problematic when seen from the teenage viewpoint, since it is usually portrayed positively. It is possible that for these boys and girls, the common problems besetting this complicated phase of life are more significant and more deserving of portrayal than those prioritised in academic discourse.

It remains to be seen whether we should be surprised by this reality as portrayed, or consider the possibility that the different views of teenagers and their adult observers, perhaps rather than the expression of different points of view or the effect of unobservable differences pertaining to the intercultural issue, might constitute more of an expression of an irreconcilable difference in terms of lifestyle and habits, and, moreover, of interests and social positions.

Proof that the image works well as discourse, and not only as a heterogeneous set of juxtaposed photographs revealing nothing about the authors, is that although we encouraged very free use of the camera to construct a visual discourse, clear patterns of representation were observed among the different authors. We designate this step from the logic of the camera as a window through which to look (a vision in which the photographer's position is neutral) to that of logic of the mirror, which understands the photo as a positioning that reveals something of the author, portraying the world in the same way as the author is portrayed by their photos.

Concluding thoughts

In this work, the use of participatory photography as a means of representing reality was shown to be a useful and valid tool to reflect perceptions of intercultural relations in students at the secondary education institutions studied. The photos taken provide a vision of how both their individual and group identities (windows to identity) are

constructed and give some key insights into how this generation manages cultural diversity (windows to the world). Visual language is shown in all its fullness, providing relevant information in knowledge gathering and outlining their way of understanding the world through the camera lens.

This is what the teenagers depicted; these are the results of the research; these are their voices, represented in the photographs. It is true that taking photographs is part of a teenage social ritual, but: Was this what we expected? Were the results a faithful reflection of intercultural relations? Should we have insisted and better explained the research objectives and the sense of using the cavernous? Should we have gone into the reasons for taking and selecting the photographs in greater depth? Should the process have been more closely supervised? Were the risks assumed inevitable? Could we have achieved the same results using other means? Is the view of the interaction and intercultural contact perceived by its protagonists valid? Could it be valid for them, yet equally so for the research?

Asking young people to produce photographs for the purposes of a research project means assuming a series of risks and gives rise to a series of questions on the meaning of such an activity and the appropriate exploration of the limitations of these practices. In this study, participant photography is something more than an aesthetic experience: it provides an ideal setting within which to explore power dynamics arising from the use of visual artefacts and relationships between participants and researchers in the process.

This experiment acknowledges the need to know the boundaries and limitations of visual methods and the active participation of research subjects in the information-gathering process. In any case, the students acknowledged and positively valued the experience, feeling at all times active protagonists and privileged participants in the process. In this regard, we recognise the need to continue to enhance student's involvement to explore and understanding educational issues - in this case related to intercultural relations - and are convinced of its contribution to a greater knowledge of the problems discussed.

Making the participants themselves the instruments of gathering relevant information by inviting them to serve as self-ethnographers is a

strategy that can be used to understand the various issues, obstacles and opportunities facing students every day from their own perspective, encouraging them to become involved in creating empowerment strategies to improve their quality of life that are more viable and realistic than those designed and imposed from outside, often by people and organisations with no direct experience of living what students experience daily (Luna, 2009).

In general and assuming certain nuances, the results showed little variability in terms of the visual discourses provided by the native and immigrant students respectively, which may lead us to consider in positive terms a degree of "being in tune" with the way they perceive and understand different relationship types and intercultural contact This may lead us to think that far from problematic considerations, the socio-educational interaction among students in secondary education centres is a process taking place without excessive turbulence other than that inherent in the adolescent condition per se. Similarly, the students' photo reportage acknowledges the potential of the group as a socialising institution and privileged place for interaction and identity building, without losing sight of the individual and personal dimension, also reflected in the photographs.

The outcomes acknowledge the importance of the educational context, with the institution itself as a privileged setting for learning and developing socio-educational processes. In this sense, the role of schools should be valued as a socialising institution exerting a positive influence on intercultural education.

The experience of using participatory photography as part of a qualitative research study into student's intercultural relations has served to complement the information compiled by other means and through different groups (teachers, principals, counsellors and families). Nevertheless, despite the dilemmas, challenges and constraints faced, we acknowledge the contributions insofar as the visual data helped us describe and document: (a) patterns, variations and changes are socially and culturally organised, integrating levels of social organisation; (b) how the social process is organised; (c) how we respond emotionally to events; and (d) how research results can be reported more clearly and effectively (Grady, 2008). If we are able to understand the power of

human visual behaviour in a careful and sensitive way, perhaps we can also make more consistent headway in the understanding of our incredible interactive world. The potential of participant photography should continue to be explored in future research.

Acknowledgements

Funding: This research was funded by Ministry of Education. Research Project I+D+I (Ref. EDU2008 05539) titled: Secondary School Students and the Cultural Diversity: Learning, Construction and Representation of Intercultural Discourse.

References

Aldridge, J. (2012). The participation of vulnerable children in photographic research. *Visual Studies, 27*(1), 48-58. doi: 10.1080/1472586X.2012.642957

Allen, Q. (2012). Photographs and stories: ethics, benefits and dilemmas of using participant photography with Black middle-class male youth. *Qualitative Research, 12*(4), 443-458. doi: 10.1177/1468794111433088

Asanova, J. (2005). Educational experiences of immigrants students from the former Soviet Union: A case study of an ethnic school in Toronto. *Educational Studies, 31*(2), 181-195. doi: 10.1080/03055690500095589

Banks, M. (1998). Visual anthropology: Image, object and interpretation. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *Image-based research: A sourcebook for qualitative researchers*. London, ENG: Falmer Press.

Barndt, D. (2001). Making, naming, and connecting - reclaiming lost arts: The pedagogical possibilities of photo story production. In P. Campbell & B. Burnaby (eds). *Participatory practices in adult education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Becker, H. (1974). Photography and sociology. *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication, 1*, 3-26.

Belin, R. (2005). 'Photo-elicitation and the Agricultural Landscape: "Seeing" and "Telling" about Farming, Community and Place'. *Visual Studies 20*(1), 56-68. doi: 10.1080/14725860500064904

Carignan, N., Pourdavood, R., King, L., & Feza, N. (2005). Social representation of diversity: multi/intercultural education in a South African urban school. *Intercultural Education, 16*(4), 381-393. doi: 10.1080/14675980500304371

Clark-Ibanez, M. (2004). Framing the social world through photo-elicitation interviews. *American Behavioral Scientist 47*(12), 1507-1527. doi: 10.1177/0002764204266236

Codjoe, H. (2006). The role of an affirmed black cultural identity and heritage in the academic achievement of African-Canadian students. *Intercultural Education, 17*(1), 33-54. doi: 10.1080/14675980500502271

Collier, J., & Collier, M. (1986). *Visual anthropology: Photography as a research method*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C., & Schiller, W. (2005). 'Multiple Methods in Qualitative Research with Children: More Insight or Just More?' *Qualitative Research 5*(4), 417-36. doi: 10.1177/1468794105056921

DeJean, W. (2008). Picture This: Using Photography to Conceptualize Social Justice. *Multicultural Perspectives, 10*(2), 105-109. doi 10.1080/15210960801998021

Ding, C. & Hall, A. (2007). Gender, ethnicity, and grade differences in perceptions of school experiencies among Adolescents. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 33* 159-174.

Emmel, N. & Clark, A. (2011). Learning to Use Visual Methodologies in Our Research: A Dialogue between Two Researchers. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum Qualitative Social Research, 72*(1), Art. 36. Reetrived from: http://nbn-resolvirm.de/urn:nbn:dc:0114-fqsl 101360

Farough, S. (2006). Believing is seeing: The matrix of vision and white masculinities. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(1), 51-83. doi: 10.1177/0891241605280494

Gallo, M. (2001). Immigrant workers' journeys through a new culture: Exploring the transformative learning possibilities of photography. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 33*(2), 109-117.

Gauntlett, D. (2007). *Creative explorations: New approaches to identities and audiences*. London: Routledge.

Giavrimis, P., Konstantinou, E., & Hatzichristou, C. (2003). Dimensions of inmigrant students' adaptation in Greek schools: self-concept and coping strategies. *Intercultural Education, 14*(4), 423-434. doi: 10.1080/1467598032000139859

Gimeno, J. (2002). *Educar y convivir en la cultura global*. Madrid: Morata.

Glaser, B. (1998) *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glover-Graf, N. (2000). Student-produced photography: A constructivist approach to teaching psychosocial aspects of disability. *Rehabilitation Education 14*(3), 285-296.

Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisements*. New York: Harper and Row.

Goopy, S., & Lloyd, D. (2005). Documenting the human condition in everyday culture: Finding a partnership between ethnography and photo-documentary. *International Journal of the Humanities 3*(5), 33-38.

Grady, J. (2008). Visual Research at the Crossroads. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research 9* (3), Art. 38. Retrived from: http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs08033 84

Guerrero, A. & Tinkler, T. (2010). Refugee and Displaced Youth Negotiating Imagined and Lived Identities in a Photography-Based Educational Project in the United States and Colombia. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 41*(1), 55–74. doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1492.2010.01067.x

Hammer, M., Bennett, M., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 27*(4), 421-443. doi: 10.1016/S0147-1767(03)00032-4

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies, 77*(1), 13-26. doi: 10.1080/14725860220137345

Haywood, J. Jr. (2007). Visual Culture Archaeology: A Criti/Politi/cal Methodology of Image and Identity. *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies, 1*(3), 3-25. doi: 10.1177/1532708606291066

Joanou, J. (2009). The bad and the ugly: ethical concerns in participatory photographic methods with children living and working on the streets of Lima, Peru. *Visual Studies 24* (3), 214-233. doi: 10.1080/14725860903309120

Jorgenson, J. & Sullivan, T. (2009). Accessing Children's Perspectives through Participatory Photo Interviews. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research 77*(1), Art. 8. Retrived from: http://nbn resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqsl00189

Killion, C. (2001). Understanding cultural aspects of health through photography. *Nursing Outlook 49*, 50-54. doi: 10.1067/mno.2001.110011

Knoblauch, H., Baer, A., Laurier, E., Petschke, S., & Schnettler, B. (2008). Visual Analysis. New Developments in the Interpretative Analysis of Video and Photography. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research 9*(3), Art. 14. Retrived from: http://nbn-resolving.dc/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0803148

Kolb, B. (2008). Involving, sharing, analysing: Potential of the participatory photo interview. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research 9* (3) Art. 12. Retrived from: http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0803127

Luna, J. (2009). Foto-etnografía llevada a cabo por personas en situación de pobreza en la frontera norte de México. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 10(2), Art. 35. Retrived from: http://nbn-resolving.de/um:nbn:de:0114-fqs0902353

Luttrell, W. (2006). Making culture visible: Children's photography, identity and agency. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, Canada.

Luttrell, W. (2010). ‘A camera is a big responsibility’: a lens for analysing children's visual voices. *Visual Studies, 25*(3), 224-237. doi: 10.1080/1472586X.2010.523274

Luttrell, W., & Chalfen, R. (2010). Lifting up voices of participatory visual research. *Visual Studies, 25*(3), 197-200. doi: 10.1080/1472586X.2010.523270

Lykes, M., Blanche, M., & Hamber, B. (2003). Narrating survival and change in Guatemala and South Africa: The politics of representation and a liberatory community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 31*(1/2), 79-90.

McAllister, C., Wilson, P. Green, B., & Baldwin, J. (2005). 'Come and take a walk': Listening to Early Head Start parents on school-readiness as a matter of child, family, and community health. *American Journal of Public Health, 95*(4), 617-625. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2004.041616

Mclntyre, A., & Lykes, B. (2004). Weaving words and pictures in/through feminist participatory action research. In M. Brydon-Miller, P. Maguire, & A. Mclntyre. (Eds). *Traveling companions: Feminism, teaching and action research*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Mizen, P., & Ofosu-Kusi, Y. (2010). Unofficial truths and everyday insights: understanding voice in visual research with the children of Accra's urban poor. *Visual Studies, 25*(3), 255-267. doi: 10.1080/1472586X.2010.523278

Morrow, V. (2001). Using Qualitative Methods to Elicit Young People's Perspectives on their Environments: Some Ideas for Community Health Initiatives. *Health Education Research 16*(3), 255-68. doi: 10.1093/her/16.3.255

Moss, J. (2008). *Researching education: Digitally-visually-spatially.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Narayan, D. (2000). *La voz de los pobres: ¿Hay alguien que nos escuche?* Madrid: Banco Mundial Ediciones Mundi-Prensa. Retrived from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPOVERTY/Resources/335642-1124115102975/1555199-1124115187705/vol1_sp.pdf

Navas, M., Rojas, A., García, M., & Pumares, P. (2007). Acculturation strategies and attitudes according to the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM): The perspectives of natives versus immigrants. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 31*(1), 67-86. doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.04.00

Packard, J. (2008). 'I'm gonna show you what it's really like out here': the power and limitation of participatory visual methods. *Visual Studies, 23*(1), 63-77. doi: 10.1080/14725860801908544

Pink, S. (2004). Applied Visual Anthropology: Social Intervention, Visual Methodologies and Anthropology Theory. *Visual Anthropology Review, 20*(1), 3-16. doi: 10.1525/var.2004.20.1.3

Planas, N. (2007). The discursive construction of learning in a multiethnic school: perspectives from non-inmigrant students. *Intercultural Education, 18*(1), 1-14. doi: 10.1080/14675980601141805

Prins, E. (2010). Participatory photography: A tool for empowerment or surveillance? *Action Research, 8*(4), 426-443. doi: 10.1177/1476750310374502

Radley, A., Hodgetts, D., & Cullen, A. (2005). Visualizing homelessness: A study on photography and estrangement. *Journal of Community and Applied Psychology, 15*(4), 273-295. doi: 10.1002/casp.825

Rose, G. (2001). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage.

Samuels, J. (2004). Breaking the ethnographer's frames: Reflections on the use of photoelicitation in understanding Sri Lankan monastic culture. *American Behavioral Scientist, 47*(12), 1528-1550. doi: 10.1177/0002764204266238

Smith, E., Gidlow, B., & Steel, G. (2012). Engaging adolescent participants in academic research: the use of photo-elicitation interviews to evaluate school-based outdoor education programmes. *Qualitative Research, 12*(4), 367–387. doi: 10.1177/1468794112443473

Smyth, J. (2008). Listening to student voice in the democratisation of schooling. In E. Samier & A. Stanley (Eds), *Political approaches to educational administration and leardership*. New York: Routledge, 240-251.

Spielman, J. (2001). The Family Photography Project: 'We will just read what the pictures tell us'. *The Reading Teacher, 54*(8), 762-770. Retrived from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20204991

Stevens, L., Hunter, L., Pendergast, D., Carrington, V., Bahr, N., Kapitzke, C., & Mitchell, J. (2007). Reconceptualizing the possible narratives of adolescence. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 34*(2), 107-127. doi: 10.1007/BF03216860

Thomson, P. & Gunter, H. (2006). From 'consulting pupils' to 'pupils as researchers': a situated case narrative. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(6), 839–856. Retrived from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30032710

Verkuyten, M., & Martinovic, B. (2006). Understanding multicultural attitudes: The role of group status, identification, friendships, and justifying ideologies. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30*(1), 1-18. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.05.015

Wang, C. (1999). Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. Journal of Women's Healt 8(2), 185-192.

Wang, C., Cash, J., & Powers, L. (2000). Who knows the streets as well as the homeless? Promoting personal and community action through Photovoice. *Health Promotion Practice, 7*(1), 81-89. doi: 10.1177/152483990000100113

Wang, C., & Redwood-Jones, Y. (2001). Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from Flint Photovoice. *Health Education & Behavior 28*(5), 560-572. doi: 10.1177/109019810102800504

Weiss, A. (2004). Spying on ourselves. *NetWorker 8*(2), 18-24. doi: 10.1145/997922.997923

Wiles R, Prosser J, Bagnoli A, Clark A, Davies K, Holland S., & Renold, E. (2008). Visual ethics: ethical issues in visual research. Southampton: ESCR National Centre for Research Methods. Review Paper NCRM/011 (p. 25). Retrived from: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/421/1/MethodsRe¬viewPaperNCRM-011.pdf

Worth, S., & Adair, J. (1972). *Through Navajo eyes: An exploration in film communication and anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Yates, L. (2010). The story they want to tell, and the visual story as evidence: young people, research authority and research purposes in the education and health domains. *Visual Studies, 25*(3), 280-291. doi: 10.1080/1472586X.2010.523281

Zenkov, K., Harmon, J., & Van Lier, P. (2008). Picture This: Seeing Diverse Youths' Ideas about Schools' Purposes, Supports, and Impediments: Students from the "Through Eyes" Project. *Multicultural Perspectives 70*(3), 162-166. doi: 10.1080/1521096080219815

Ziller, R. (1990). *Photographing the self*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

José M. Coronel Llamas is Lecturer in the Department of Education. University of Huelva, Spain.

Iván Rodríguez Pascual is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Work. University of Huelva, Spain.

Contact Address: School of Education, Department of Education, University of Huelva, Campus de El Carmen s/n, 21007 Huelva, Spain. Email: coronel@uhu.es