Video ethics in educational research involving children: Literature review and critical discussion

Michael A. Peters, E. Jayne White, Tina Besley, Kirsten Locke, Bridgette Redder, Rene Novak, Andrew Gibbons, John O'Neill, Marek Tesar & Sean Sturm

To cite this article: Michael A. Peters, E. Jayne White, Tina Besley, Kirsten Locke, Bridgette Redder, Rene Novak, Andrew Gibbons, John O'Neill, Marek Tesar & Sean Sturm (2020): Video ethics in educational research involving children: Literature review and critical discussion, Educational Philosophy and Theory, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2020.1717920

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1717920

Published online: 29 Jan 2020.

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Video ethics in educational research involving children: Literature review and critical discussion


Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, P. R. China; RMIT, Melbourne, Australia; Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand; Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood, New Zealand; School of Education, University of Waikato, Hamilton, & BestStart, Tauranga, New Zealand; School of Education, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand; Institute of Education, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand; Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT
Video ethics in educational research involving children is a recent topic that has arisen since the increase in the use of visual mediums in research (such as photovoice and video) especially with the development of new and ubiquitous internet technologies and social media. This paper emerged as an expressed concerned by a group of scholars associated with the new Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (Brill) that was established in 2016. The paper is the result of a collective writing process over a period of a few months that discusses visual studies in education and visual ethics in relation to qualitative research and as it applies to children. The article also uses the newly established convention of open review, publishing the results with the paper.

1. Introduction
This article is an exercise in collective writing and research that addresses the vexed question of video ethics in educational research, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of young children. It emerges from pedagogical and research contexts that are now utilising video to understand, include, and advocate for (and with) children. While video is not a new phenomenon in education, its legitimised presence in scholarship has been slow to appear until the arrival of the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy.\(^1\) As the first journal of its type in the world to publish a journal based on videos, and as a consequence of its Open Access status, there were clear ethical concerns from the outset in consideration of children in particular. We knew that researchers and teachers working in this space would be reluctant to contribute video articles based on their research without some guarantees of ethical protection for child subjects. This was especially so given that ‘informed consent’ is a tricky concept when children are involved. Yet, at the same time, we wanted readers to have ready access to visual representations of research alongside and sometimes even instead of text that tends to dominate the scholarship domain. Our resolution was pragmatic: we simply held that researchers should meet the ethical criteria concerning
human subjects of their home institutions – taking into account ethical guidelines already in place for their work or country. However, we also set out to understand how such guidelines worked, what assurances they required, and what underpinned their premise. To this end members of the Association for Visual Pedagogies\(^2\) and the journal set up a committee to investigate and report back on video ethics for children. This article is the result of our investigations which we hope will provide a starting place for discussions concerning how we might approach these vexing questions. These and related questions are becoming increasingly important as the world turns to visual culture – a world now saturated with social media - for inspiration and answers. Our article begins with an introduction to the topic by laying bare some serious questions confronting educators and researchers alike in working with video, then explores visual culture as a contemporary and ubiquitous means of seeing into the world of and for learners. We then introduce the journal which brought the ethical questions we explore into the spotlight in relation to publishing and visibility. Subsequent sections investigate the ethical issues we face – first in general terms and then in terms of children – ending with some additional ethical issues to navigate in light of recent technologies and attitudes. Our final remarks synthesise these views and set forth a series of provocations for future work. The article comprises the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Visual studies in education
3. The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy
4. Ethical dilemmas and reflexivity in qualitative research
5. Visual ethics: ethical issues in visual research
6. Using digital video as a research tool: ethical issues for researchers
7. Visual children: a silent(ced) ethical dilemma
8. Taking ethical photos of children for medical and research purposes
9. Ethical considerations when applying virtual reality technology in research with children
10. Final remarks
11. Reviewers’ reflections

The article follows the methodology and philosophy of collective writing, the ethos of the Editors’ Collective\(^3\) and the basis of a dozen successful academic articles that explore collective writing, peer review, openness and academic subjectivity, including the twenty-one authors in ‘Toward a philosophy of academic publishing’ (Peters, Jandrić, et al., 2016)\(^4\) and ‘Experimenting with academic subjectivity: collective writing, peer production and collective intelligence’ (Peters, Besley, & Arndt, 2019).\(^5\)

The methodology was quite straightforward: (a) a literature review was carried out on the topic with all results collected as pdf articles and an orienting introduction produced; (b) the material was structured into ten subheadings that reflects the major extant concepts; (c) the list of subtopics were circulated to the group who were asked to select a topic; (d) the group participants were initially requested to write approximately 500 words on their topic; (e) participants were asked to familiarise themselves with the literature on ‘collective writing’; (f) participants were asked to make their contributions within a couple of months; (g) contributions were added and formatted as they were submitted; (h) the draft was circulated to the whole group for editorial work and final editing including the addition of ‘final remarks’.

2. Visual studies in education (Michael A. Peters, Tina Besley and E. Jayne White)

In 2013 a group of New Zealand education scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, including some involved in writing this article, became interested in visual culture and the field of visual studies in education, including visualization methodologies. The group jointly held the
view that education and social sciences had yet to explore and develop visual research methods and the convergence of research with visual culture. We knew of many teachers who were curating videos of their own or utilised existing video clips in their teaching and assessment. We were also keenly aware of the huge growth in online teaching and learning platforms that utilised images, yet there were few reports of exploring the composition, creation and reproduction of the moving image for pedagogical purposes.

Educational research using video has also been slow to develop. Video-based observation research started to become a promising method and with new low-cost technical improvements, ethnographic video recordings helped to revitalize the fields of social science, especially anthropology and education. In the field of education particularly, video research is predominantly characterised by small-scale ethnographic projects that collect descriptive data using participant observation as the principal research method via video recordings of children. These and related studies appreciate that visual narrative offers some distinctly different vantage points from the written narrative concerning movement and sound, as well as new forms of validity and reliability that disrupt one-off assertions of truth concerning what can and cannot be seen. Despite its many benefits as opposed to traditional forms of observation, video recording has been underutilized as a data collection tool because of confidentiality and privacy issues that are especially pronounced in early childhood studies where there are many predators. Video-as-data also provided greater flexibility in the recording, classification, description and coding of behaviour. It has also begun to tentatively challenge principles of evidence and, in the service of new methodological approaches, challenge the very notion of subjectivity itself (Murris & Soern, 2019).

The wider field of visual culture in popular media is constructed daily by users at the interface with new technologies using the Internet as platform. Never has the visual been more prominent. Individuals, groups, researchers, teachers and students take photos, make videos and edit them and store them in the Cloud – often for all to see. The technologies have developed rapidly and now have become standard programs on smart phones – so much so that visual fields now order (and manipulate) new ways of thinking (White & Odegaard, 2019). The younger generation seem somehow most adept and familiar with image processing and appear to be well in advance of both teachers and researchers in these worlds. Some hold the view that today’s students are becoming increasingly more remote from books and the culture of print and correspondingly more at ease with moving images, with video and film. It seems that there is a sense of needing to play ‘catch-up’ if education is to meet learners in the visual spaces that orient their lives.

With all this in mind the group began to entertain the idea of setting up a new learned society and journal dedicated to video research in education set within the framework of visual culture and visualization. Such a journal would create a much-needed space to not only share visual pedagogies and research, but also to explore this new normality for and with learners. Since the academic journal - anchored in the late eighteen and nineteenth centuries - remained firmly in the age of print publishing, we set out to bring it into alignment with the emerging digital global knowledge system, visual culture, pedagogy and research for proto-learners and their teachers today and for tomorrow. Hence the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy was born, along with the Association for Visual Pedagogies in 2015 to support the journal.

3. The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (Michael A. Peters)

The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy initiates a new movement in academic publishing in the field of Education by establishing the first video journal in the field and a database of video articles that captures the latest developments in educational practice, including teacher education, classroom teacher and child observation. The journal provides a database of video articles that is dedicated to teaching and education fundamentals through simple and easy to
understand demonstrations. The journal also uses the video medium and research on new visualization methodologies to provide structured interviews with leading scholars. This is the first video journal in the field of Education to utilise the medium of the video clip to scientifically examine, critique and problematise teaching moments in a multimedia format based on a 15 minute clip supported by text materials such as teaching notes, theory explanations, literature review, and a full set of references. Rather than writing about the development of the journal here and the issue of video ethics with young children we highlight and refer readers to sites where we have previously discussed these questions.

i. The first webpage introduces the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy from the site of the Association for Visual Pedagogies, the association that owns the journal. It provides some information on the editorial team and the sponsoring founding institutions.

ii. The second webpage introduces readers to the Brill publisher's site that includes live articles for Volumes 1 (2016), 2 (2017) and 3 (2018). It also provides all articles so far published in the journal.

iii. The third site provides an early interview with the editors on setting up the journal based on a set of questions in 2016 (Peters, Jandrić, et al., 2016)

iv. The fourth site is a record of a talk given by Michael Peters and Jayne White to introduce their thinking behind the development of the journal at the inaugural conference of the Association for Visual Pedagogies in Zagreb, June 2016. The video journal is introduced as a third generation form of scientific communication after the print-based journal and the digital online journal. The concept of the journal as the cornerstone of the scientific enterprise has evolved as new media technologies have become available. Industrial media known for its broadcast functionality of one to the many now is being replaced and remediﬁed with video and mixed media increasingly with an accent on responsiveness and interactivity. In the second part of the presentation forms of visuality are explored and new visualization methodologies are discussed.

v. The fifth site is an editorial by Jayne E. White entitled ‘Video Ethics and Young Children’ where she raises the question and puts forward an agenda concerning video ethics involving young children. This editorial was an earlier attempt to start this discussion based on Jayne’s own experiences as an early years researcher and the struggles that she, and others, encountered in their efforts to work with video in these spaces.

4. Ethical dilemmas and reflexivity in qualitative research – (Kirsten Locke)

Video research in education highlights the ethical dimensions to reflexivity and the responsibilities the researcher has in ensuring their research actions are carefully positioned in relation to the visual ‘data’ being collected. As this collective writing piece demonstrates, the need for a practical ‘ethic of care’ that unleashes the participatory potential of this kind of research while maintain ethical relationships within the research context (and beyond) brings in a heightened emphasis on the reflexive activity that is germane to academic research of all kinds. The importance and challenge posed by reflexivity in qualitative research in general signals interesting openings and ambiguities when placed within the context of video recording the research encounter specifically. Importantly, the notion of reflexivity when framed within the written text as the interpretation of the researcher’s own imbrication in the research encounter shifts to a much more fluid, temporal and potentially more exposed position that cannot be so easily buffered, shaped and potentially obfuscated through academic textual analysis. When looking at how the notion of reflexivity was developed in the context of ethnographic research, for instance, the idea that the researcher themselves needed to be aware of their own impact on how the research encounter unfolded was seen as a correlate to the growing awareness of the
power differential between ‘researcher’ and ‘participant’. An important dimension to the power differential was also to look at the way the researcher, whether they intended to or not, became part of the object of analysis through virtue of providing the analytical ‘eye’ of interpreting data. According to Okely and Callaway (1992, p. ix), elements such as ‘race, nationality, gender, age and personal history of the fieldworker affect the process, interaction and emergent material’ that constitutes the social relations of the research encounter. Davies refers to this as ‘turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference’. She continues:

In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research (Davies, 1999, p. 4).

This pointedly brings us back to the immediacy of the videoed research encounter and the direct engagement the participants have to their wider viewing audience as well as to the curatorial dimension to the researcher as ‘lens’ and ‘author’. While there is so much resistance to the use of the video recording, especially of children, in the education research community as has been outlined above, there are also some important areas of liberation and resistance that have direct bearing on the notion of reflexivity and which are interesting analytical lines to pursue. As Anderson and Muñoz Proto point out, video has the potential to ‘show’ and not just ‘tell’ a phenomenon and this is extremely important when placed in the context of the process of doing research and ensuring the ‘personnel’ conducting the research are right for the job. The troubling of the ‘objective’ researcher as the revealer of a ‘truth’ by video places even more ethical responsibility on the researcher to ensure their analytical ‘lens’ is consonant with the intentions and actions of their participants. Anderson and Muñoz Proto (2016) point out, video ‘can trouble the traditional power dynamics between participant and researcher. Literally ‘looking back’ at the world through technologies, participants are invited to use research as a vehicle to speak for themselves and their communities’ (Anderson & Muñoz Proto, 2016, p. 381). The researcher, then, becomes less a fount of all-knowing authority and more of a conduit to give voice to, and space for, a more authentic and meaningful notion of reflexivity that extends beyond the authorial gaze to that of the agentic manoeuvres of participant-informed research. Not only does video-based research have relevance for the research encounter, then, it also has relevance for the ways researchers reflexively operate in the research setting.

5. Visual ethics: Ethical issues in visual research – (Rene Novak)

The Economic and Social Research Council [ESRC] National Centre for Research Methods wrote an influential Review Paper that has outlined some of the important issues that need considering by researchers undertaking visual research with media such as film, photos or video (Wiles et al., 2008). A decade ago, they recognised that the ethical issues that visual researchers face develop from the very specific individual research contexts their studies are positioned in and hence this creates significant problems for researchers as they attempt good ethical practice. Delivering guidance and support in this area is also difficult, due to the diverse nature of visual research.

Nevertheless, this review identifies some common ethical considerations, that may emerge from a number of important issues, such as consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and supplies several useful examples on how to manage these in creative ways. Wiles et al. (2008) also stress the importance of researchers engaging with current theories and approaches to ethics, to be able to arm themselves with formidable understanding of how and why they will be using certain tools from their arsenal of ethical considerations. Furthermore, important ethical decisions should be made in consultation with the researcher’s moral outlook and the relevant professional guidelines in order to be able to articulate and argue a moral case for their ethical decisions. This is especially important considering the rapid rise of ethical regulation in academic
research (Dingwall, 2012) and is vital for ensuring the reputation as well as integrity of current and future visual research.

The review (Wiles et al., 2008) suggests that foremost, researchers need to understand the universal ethical considerations before they engage with the specific requirements of the many types of visual approaches to research. Therefore they start their review by providing some of the important considerations applying to all research in social sciences, clarifying ‘the links, overlaps and differences between morals, ethics, ethical approaches, ethical frameworks, ethical regulation and legal regulation are an important starting point for this paper,’ (Wiles et al., 2008, p. 4). Understanding these relationships will enable the visual researcher to establish a balance between the researcher’s individual moral outlook and the correlating specific moral principles about right and wrong established by the society, by actively engaging with such ethical issues through drawing from a range of resources from literature and the research community. Specifics of visual research are addressed in the second part of their article where the authors engage with issues of consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Questions such as which people captured in research videos or photographs need to give consent, and what is needed to safeguard the participants and the researcher are outlined in the article. When considering anonymity and confidentiality some concrete examples are given on how to anonymise the visual data while minimising the adulteration of data.

Visual data provides researchers with the ability to comprehend substantial amounts of data. It also enables the development of various hypotheses related to that data and the perceived properties that are otherwise hard to determine (Kerren, Ebert, & Meyer, 2007). However, the increased research scope of visual research requires researchers to increase their scope of understanding visual ethics and the discussed article above provides ample help with this endeavour.

6. Using digital video as a research tool: Ethical issues for researchers - (Bridgette Redder)

Digital video has rapidly become entrenched in modern everyday life. From digital cinema to television to YouTube to live streaming channels to mobile apps like Snapchat to the open use of video for surveillance purposes in public domains, its ubiquitous influence has shaped and is shaping how the world is seen, known and felt. The rise of technological advancements in digital video has swiftly increased its availability and use by researchers because of more affordable cost and often minimal expertise required to use digital video as a research too. Latest smartphone video technology in 2019 (e.g. iPhone 11 Pro Max, 5 G versions of Samsung’s Note 10 and Galaxy S10 and Huawei Mate 30 Pro) and accompanying editing apps now make video recording even more accessible without necessarily requiring specific video equipment – a further move in accessibility and democratisation of videoing.12 As such, new possibilities for educational research have been afforded through: the recording, editing and analysing of video data; the use of video apps; and the availability of a wide array of different types of video recording devices, some which have the potential to ‘mix’ reality creating new and altered environments and visualisations in real time. It is the omnipresent nature of digital video technology in the early 21st century that means it has become taken-for-granted, such that its usage and implications of this are seldom debated much except when some parents and educators worry about the amount of time children and young people spend on digital devices and want to address censorship and cyber-bullying. The technology now enables anyone with a smart phone, iPad, tablet etc to create, upload, share and download videos.

Video data can enhance and add unique value to qualitative educational research. However, digital video as a research tool often gives rise to ethical issues with challenges, that although not insurmountable, do require serious consideration and at times cautious navigation. Such
ethical issues primarily concern data collection, representation, presentation and ownership and may include:

- authenticity – there is potential for the original meaning and context of raw video data to be altered in the editing process resulting in misleading representations from the video data, compromising the integrity of the video data that are being reported and presented (Schuck & Kearney, 2006);
- ‘highly subjective judgements’ concerning the selection of video footage or images from the raw digital video for data collection, analysis and presentation purposes (Schuck & Kearney, 2006, p. 461);
- the use of video methods that cannot guarantee confidentiality, anonymity and privacy (Schuck & Kearney, 2006);
- ownership of data sources such as digital video-based documentation that is participant generated (Schuck & Kearney, 2006), or video research projects which are supported with public funds e.g. controversy exists surrounding whether or not ‘resources produced with public funds should be available to the public that underwrites them’ (Derry, Hickey, & Koschmann, 2007, p. 63);
- first rights to intellectual property (Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage Project (IPinCH), 2013);
- storage and archiving of the video data (IPinCH, 2013);
- sharing of video data sources e.g. sharing with users within a research community who have limited knowledge surrounding the conditions and context related to the original collection of the video data (Derry et al., 2007);
- ensuring the voices of children are represented without causing harm (Schuck & Kearney, 2006);
- the difficulty of removing content from the internet once it has been disseminated (IPinCH, 2013).

The literature suggests ethical complexities surrounding the use of digital video as a research tool are alleviated by having honest and transparent discussions with participants regarding ownership and presentation of video data as part of the informed consent process. When using websites and images as (Schuck & Kearney, 2006, p. 453) point out, researchers need to safeguard against ‘dangers of invasion of privacy [and] child abuse …’. Recognising the potential of digital video, they ‘urge researchers to use careful judgement, so that a potentially valuable educational research tool [digital video] is not ignored as a result of over-reaction’. While advocates argue for the benefits of using digital video as a research tool, particularly with the rise of mobile technologies, in generating understandings of how researchers might capture ‘new’ educational data in real and virtual time the ethics of adopting video into research remain unclear. Perhaps the dilemma for the researcher is not so much ethical as it is a moral one.


Perhaps the most contested and challenging domain of our work in the field of visual pedagogies lies in the contemplation of children. As objects of the researchers gaze, subjects in the classroom, members of social media and other digital platforms, or co-producers of image and/or film, children are inevitably implicated in what we produce, how we produce it and the claims that are made about what is produced. Such productions – whether they are Facebook uploads, films in popular culture or ‘hard core’ research in academic journals such as VJEP – bring with them significant tensions. On the one hand they provide an important means of granting voice to the youngest members of society; while on the other hand, they have the potential to
compromise children’s safety. Considered against a rights discourse, children are entitled to have their voices seen and heard as a democratic route to participation and citizenship. Yet particular ethical dilemmas arise when we consider principles of consent (and especially with the very young – assent) concerning the extent to which we are able to invite their perspectives and uphold their wishes accordingly; principles of ‘do no harm’ which take into consideration the unplanned use of visual material for potentially compromising purposes; and principles of anonymity and/or confidentiality – which cannot be assured when visual representations are central to our pedagogical interrogations.

The situation becomes even more tenuous when we consider the location of these visual images/videos of children within social media where they are inevitably unleashed into cyber-worlds of ‘big data’ and practices such as web-scraping in which there is little or no agency afforded to the community, let alone the child. As Berman, Powell, and Herranz (2018) point out, the enduring nature of information on the internet means that any digital footprint cannot be easily erased – a video or image of a child will potentially accompany them through their entire life (and even beyond) – and any accompanying analysis cannot be guaranteed as the only way these visual portrayals will be ‘read’ or manipulated, for that matter. Yet they also point out that ‘potential replacement of engagement with algorithms could have significant implications for children and may be counter to article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), 1989) which states that children have right to have a say on matters that affect them’ (p. 22). In Open Access journals, such as VJEP, we grapple with these vexing conditions in our promotion of visual pedagogies as a deep source of insight, revelation, retrospection and advocacy concerning all learners - not least the children who orient our futures as a society. These processes call upon reflexivity (see previous sections) on the part of the researcher. We are now also seeing that researchers working with very young children are called into relational encounter too – since their ability to understand and interpret what constitutes ‘assent’ on the part of the child requires attunement with both the subject and those around them who know them well (White, 2020).

I raised this tension in a video editorial (VJEP) three years ago in which I called for a robust discussion on this tension for young children particularly (White, 2017). The silence in response to my provocation was resounding. This seemed surprising given the rising usage of formal and informal uses of image and video concerning children in all of our lives. As a society AVP persists in promulgating a visual agenda for children, as parents, grandparents, artists, activists, researchers, newsmakers or film-producers, as a source of advocacy, perhaps even hope. We do this for a host of reasons – for many it is out of a deep desire to grant children presence, perhaps even ‘participatory voice’, in the world, while for others it is done as a source of pride (perhaps also as entertainment). Children, themselves, are often protagonists in their own visual exposure within these realms – not least in the form of home-made videos, face-book selfies, Instagram or illustrative portrayals that now proliferate social media spaces, to name but a few. The barriers between what counts as ‘research’ and what counts as ‘entertainment’ are blurring with these encounters, and with it, our grasp on traditional parameters for ethical engagement.

Since it seems the proverbial horse has already bolted despite our persistent fears, it is pleasing, therefore, to see that Childwatch and Unicef have recently banded together to try to bring greater awareness to these issues concerning research with children (UNICEF, 2018). Instead of issuing a series of universal ‘shoulds’ and ‘should nots’ they offer a set of guidelines which provide checklists for the application of ethical principles in social media and research. This is important work in advancing research involving children while endorsing important persistent as well as new and evolving ethical principles in consideration of new contextual realities. It is our great hope at Association for Visual Pedagogies that we can contribute to this space with the same kinds of support for visual representation, production and research concerning children and their right to be seen as well as heard in these spaces, and our quest to promote visual modes of production for pedagogy – without condemnation and with our ethical curation of
both ‘innocent’ and ‘not-so-innocent’ voices accordingly. Thirty years out from UNCROC’s (1989) claims concerning the rights of the child, it seems that there is no more important agenda for us all.

8. Taking ethical photos of children for medical and research purposes – (Andrew Gibbons)

The practice of medical photography, including the photography of children, dates back to the mid-19th century (Roberts, 2016). The 21st century of medical photography for clinical and research practices incorporates the usual host of new techno-media possibilities including social media (Kling, 2018), 3D imagery (Kee, Kimble, & Stockton, 2015), and virtual and augmented reality.

Clinicians and medical researchers have good reason to recognise the benefits of instant sharing of patient images for rapid and collegial diagnosis, measurement, teaching, grant applications, for different forms of sharing visual analyses, and for raising public awareness (Devakumar et al., 2013; Kling, 2018; Roberts, 2016). ‘Photographs are used with best intentions to advocate for “greater good” however photographs taken for medical practice or research can also contravene the rights of the child (Devakumar et al., 2013, p. 33). Hence this tradition of medical photography for clinical and research purposes, and its contemporary multi-modal evolutions, ‘have recently come under scrutiny, in large part because of the effective activism and scholarship around people born of indeterminate sex’ (Roberts, 2016, p. 341).

The term ‘telemedicine’ defines the sharing of images to treat patients (Snyman, 2012). Snyman (2012) argued that, in the context of South Africa, ethical guidelines and standards had yet to catch-up with this practice. While still arguably catching up with practice, ethical standards and guidelines, once overlooked (Devakumar et al., 2013), provide evidence of what may have been happening/happened, with the use of images, and what should happen.

Cultural historians provide a new lens on the ethical dimensions of the tradition of medical photography and in particular draw lessons for ethical guidelines based on interpretation of harrowing images of children locked into medical contraptions or holding strenuous physical poses (Osten, 2010; Roberts, 2016). Analysis of the use of images in the Internet age reveal new concerns regarding consent, experience, necessity and consequences (Devakumar et al., 2013; Kling, 2018; Roberts, 2016, Snyman, 2012). Open access publishing, digitalisation of images, the use of the internet and social media all impact on the ethical use of photographs of children in medical contexts (Devakumar et al., 2013; Kling, 2018; Snyman, 2012). In a paradigm of image proliferation, writers have voiced contemporary concerns about issues ranging from the lack of any reasonable justification for the use of photography (Devakumar et al., 2013) to the secondary use of photography without approval of child, parent, or photographer (Snyman, 2012).

According to Kling (2018) two essential concerns regarding photographic practices are the failure to provide an explanation of the purpose of the photography, and the implications and limits of consent. Parents and children are increasingly likely to be asked whether a photograph can be taken by a practitioner or researcher. This understanding, for both parent and child, impacts on the capacity to consent or object. That capacity is also affected by attending power relations. Put simply, will a parent worry that saying no to photography will impact on the quality of care? In addition, the stress associated with the medical condition impact on both parent and child in terms of making an informed decision. While the experience of the child patient before and during the use of photography in their clinical experience may be clearly recognised, less understanding is evident with the storage and later use of images for research and/or data gathering purposes.

Research of the parent perspectives on the use of medical photography with a child during a hospital stay indicated that parents recognised the value of photography, and the importance of consent. Parents also recognised issues with dissemination. They were more comfortable with
the idea of a photograph being used in a localised professional context, than in publications, or shared more widely with the medical profession through professional networks (Hacard et al., 2013). In other words, the more public, the less comfortable they were. These concerns for the use of photography are based on a view of the intimacy of the photograph for the patient, and the dignity and privacy of the experience (Devakumar et al., 2013).

On the topic of consent, research with medical doctors and researchers indicated a general agreement for the need for informed consent when taking photographs but there were a number of problems in doing this, such as different concepts of consent, language and literacy barriers and the ability to understand the information. There was no consensus as to the form that the consent should take (Devakumar et al., 2013, p. 27).

Key concerns are consistent with general research ethics guidelines around consent and coercion. While doctors and researchers preferred written consent, they also recognised the importance of context in determining the way consent was established (Devakumar et al., 2013). However, the development of standards for consent have also been recognised as important for the ethical use of photography (Hacard et al., 2013).

Ethical standards additionally require a critical understanding of the non-neutrality of the practice of photographing children for medical purposes, and that ‘cultural understandings of bodies are articulated through visualizing practices intended to ensure objectivity’ (Roberts, 2016, p. 332). In other words, ethical concerns arise where a medical practitioner or researcher fails to recognise their own cultural positioning and that of their patients in their clinical or research practice, and in the practice of photography more generally. That concern then raises the question as to whether medical practitioners and researchers are sufficiently versed in cultural protocols regarding the use of images, and the exploitation of those images. These debates also present particular cultural images of the child, as vulnerable and open to exploitation, but also at the same time as a citizen with rights over their images and the images of the conditions which they present.

9. Ethical considerations when applying virtual reality technology in research with children – (Rene Novak)

While applying traditional visual technologies such as photographs and videos to research with children give rise to several ethical considerations, employing virtual reality (VR) in this context incepts a whole range of additional ethical issues that beg investigating. As the technology has been disseminated to the general consumer only in the recent years and is still in rapid development (Darvasi, 2016), most of the ethical concerns regarding the technology are also fairly new and thus there has not yet been enough time available to subject the use of the technology with children to rigorous examination. Currently many opinions regarding the issue are being shared, however academic research articles examining ethical concerns for the use of VR specifically with children are scarce. Nevertheless, this contribution will endeavour to list and explain a number of important considerations that according to the consensus of various sources should be made when contemplating this endeavour.

While the use of VR with children has yielded a number of positive outcomes when it was applied to help with autism, treat PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) develop empathy, manage pain and becoming a transformative tool in education, it has a darker side to it as does most technology (Heidegger, 1996). Some argue that the most important consideration is the starting age at which a VR head mounted device can be used with children. Several sources agree that children below the age of 13 should not be using the devices at all (Kenwright, 2019; Southgate, Smith, & Scevak, 2017), as the limited data that is available warns about the effects of the technology on the young brain and eye development. To be able to understand the long-term effects of immersive technology exposure for children, longitudinal studies are required (Southgate et al., 2017).
Short-term research has however shown that in comparison with adults who are able to regulate their feeling of presence in VR, children are a lot more susceptible to the sensorial impact of the stimuli generated by the technology, creating intense feelings of presence that cause children to mistake virtuality for reality and consequently make them susceptible to a much higher risk of manipulation (Madary & Metzinger, 2016). Further potential hazards of prolonged exposure to VR may include addiction, unnoticed psychological changes, mental illness and manipulation of agency (Darvasi, 2016).

The data about children, their privacy and consent are further ethical issues that arise with the use of VR, where data capturing can occur in unprecedented ways and can through monitoring biometrics include their physical movements, location, gaze and emotional states; opening up further opportunities for malicious application of mind control interfaces (Craig & Georgieva, 2018).

As children using VR may be connected to interactive online social worlds, as online bullying and harassment migrate from social media, they can also become an issue. The connectivity to the internet might also enable hackers to alter viewed content. Regulating all content viewed by children is very important, due to the immense effect immersion has on young brains; some even suggesting it may have the potential to cause PTSD (Kenwright, 2019). On the other end of the spectrum, exposure to VR content may also cause desensitization through interaction with violent content causing a decrease of empathy in the real world.

When using VR in research with children it is important to curate content, limit exposure and monitor responses and reactions (Darvasi, 2016). For further deliberation Southgate et al. (2017) offer a practical framework for asking ethical questions in VR, AR and MR research with children.

10. Final remarks – (John O’Neill & Tina Besley)

Through this collaborative writing exercise, we are in effect feeling our way towards what it might mean to exercise a practical ethic of care (toward researchers, research participants and, often, incidental others) concerning the very particular relationships that arise when moving image data, educational research and children are combined in the hope of revealing novel truths about contemporary pedagogy in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Fortunately, as we have shown, considered, thoughtful and empathetic ethical debates and their practical applications already occur in various areas that are closely related to the focus of this article. Arguably, we now know enough to be able to tread carefully yet confidently as researchers of the visual in our world, of visual cultures, of education, and as researchers who use visual methodologies in relation to both static and moving images. We can also articulate some of the key commonalities and differences between the use of moving image data in everyday life and scholarly research contexts, and ensure that research participants are positioned to give fully informed consent to what we ask of them. The history of static imagery records and visual imagery documentaries helps illuminate some of the intended and unintended consequences of treating adults and children as research ‘subjects’ or ‘objects’ as opposed to ‘participants’ or ‘co-researchers’. This, in turn, gives us pause for thought about the differences between analogue 19th and 20th century static and moving imagery that is purported to be an accurate and complete record of actual human behaviour; and 21st century digital and virtual reality recordings that may be ‘reality’ but are commonly portrayed as invented, imagined or manipulated human behaviour.

Moreover, in creating and publishing raw moving image data, we need to be aware of our relative inability to control how such data are used subsequently, and therefore the very limited undertakings that we can in all honesty give to children and adults about how their data will be protected in years to come ‘in the Cloud’. These latter considerations, in particular, require us as researchers to be reflexive about our impact both on the research encounter (i.e. as researchers
and participants), and on those who view and read the results of our research (i.e. people with both good and bad intentions).

Key considerations are:

First, consider why use video for the research? Is the individual or collective identity of those who appear in video data essential to the ‘truth’ of the phenomenon under investigation (we suspect that in most instances it is individual and social behaviour that is of most research interest, not the identity of those involved).

Second, consent and anonymity: to what extent can we address and ensure this as we would in written research? For example, is it ok to use full images of people if they have given consent? Or, what are the minimum personally identifying features (e.g. eyes) that can be removed or disguised in order provide the same level of anonymity to visual imagery research participants as any other qualitative data source.

Third, given the ubiquity of smartphones, video apps and social media sites worldwide, how can a learned society such as the Association for Visual Pedagogies promote the development and distribution of pixellating freeware that enables scholars and practitioners, especially those in the Global South, to engage freely in pedagogical research using visual methodologies? Fourth, the researcher needs to consider cultural contexts including their own cultural positioning as well as the power relations involved.

Some further innovations in educational research that equips research participants, be they children or adults, with cameras or videos takes the question of methodology several steps closer to embracing a ‘sympathetic’ or subjective viewpoint where the image, video or visuality is governed completely by the researched or ‘through their eyes’ so to speak, even though the research event might be structured by the researcher and by her questions. Indeed, this is in part the methodology of ‘Photovoice’ which uses static images rather than moving ones as a qualitative tool to document social reality through subject participation to promote empowerment, perspective and involvement. In 1992, Photovoice was developed by Caroline Wang, University of Michigan, and Mary Ann Burris, Program Officer for Women’s Health, Ford Foundation, Beijing, China to ‘empower the silenced rural women in Yunnan Province, China to influence the policies and programs affecting them’ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photovoice). It built on feminist theory, and Freirean concepts in particular empowerment and critical consciousness, and used documentary photography (Kuratani & Lai, 2011; Wang & Burris, 1994; 1997).

Primarily using a still camera image, Photovoice expresses the subject’s viewpoint highlighting various concerns of the research. The photo is taken by the subject and then become the basis for careful discussion often in a group about the material which is also used to represent the voices of the subject(s). The resulting research is returned to the subject community for further discussion or indeed used in the process of a co-constructed or co-created final research as a basis for dialogue with various agencies or authorities. This research technique has been also used with children and is strongly influenced by the tradition of the public documentary and concepts of empowerment, participatory research, and practical ideology critique or political consciousness raising. Photovoice is research methodology that equips the subjects with research tools to record their subjectivity and their view has a myriad of uses in ‘participatory visual research’ that focuses on self-development, advocacy, life project, monitoring social situations and international representation. Often it is politically driven and aimed at social change and the motivation of subjects to take control of their own lives. It has been used in areas such as public and community health, social work, issues and activism, with minority and marginalised groups, and education-related fields (see Kuratani & Lai, 2011; https://participedia.net/method/5016).

Photovoice uses static images, so the next move is to shift to the moving digital video, with the changes and ubiquity in digital video technologies, and to also shift the visual research methodology in broader directions. The ubiquity of the technology and ease of visual recording makes this an attractive option for researchers. Yet it can be problematic for children because such ease and simplicity of user-created content via the latest technologies can mean that children may
reveal too much of themselves or at least reveal more than is necessary for the research or even reveal that which later becomes embarrassing, so at the sharing and discussion stage there is a need to build in controls for subjects where they can decide to wipe, clean or edit scenes that they have recorded. In some cases this new kind of visual research gives way to forms of activism and citizen photo journalism. But in all cases the ethical issues do not disappear.

11. Review one: Collective intelligence on ethics, video and children – (Marek Tesar)

The innovative and highly productive methodology of collective writing developed by Michael A. Peters has, over the past five years, been well used and appropriated in relation to multiple subjects and topics. In this instance, the collaborative approach utilises collective intelligence to traverse the territories of video (and visual) relations with ethics and children, where diverse scholars, mostly well-versed in educational philosophy or the practice of working with children, debate the subject of ethics, video and children from multiple angles.

The contested narratives around ethics and children have long pointed to the idea of non-singularity of engagement with this topic, where the idea of one human voice should not be able to make a decision about such complex and often potentially explosive topics in both scholarly and lay domains. Hence, a collective approach to ideas, with clearly outlined methodologies, is not only methodologically robust, but also an ethical way to approach such sensitive issues, upon which, as discussed in the article, the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy is based. The collective article presents a multiplicity of engagements, discussing issues from informed consent to virtual reality, employing multiple paradigms, and powerful thinking about video culture, and medical discourses and their impact on education, ethics, the visual and the child. Similarly, this current work by Peters et al. provides an excellent review of ethics, and video and visual studies in education.

I am particularly interested in and intrigued by the idea of axiology, and how it relates to this topic. In my reading of the article, axiology responds to the call for ethics and aesthetics being merged and considered in a mutual relationality between subjects; or subjects and objects. Seeing the concerns through the axiological lens can not only spur a rethinking of the philosophy of ethics in the video and visual practice of children, but also create an alternative reading of the practical context of the use of videos involving children. Stemming from E. Jayne White's section about silent/silenced debate, the visual without an audio, the moving image, can be selected and dissected; cut and pasted just like in Deleuze's Cinema 1 – The Movement Image. We are concerned about the subject, about the selection, the cutting and pasting. The frame moves, then stops, a re-framing and re-starting of the visual, recalibrating, and then the video moves to the next sequence of a child. Intersections of child, and the image of the child. Such is the view of the axiology of the problem – the weaving of ethics and aesthetics, and further thought processes that stem from this article.

This collective piece also draws attention to subjects that often remain hidden under the surface; or are taken for granted and not discussed in scholarly work. We could potentially see some of the recurring issues that have been debated for a long time, like Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics which is, as visible through the debates in this article, relevant to visual and video pedagogies (e.g. through the virtue ethics). The final concern that perhaps is indirectly raised in this article is, who is here to be protected, and who are the ethics for? To protect children and their families, researchers, or the institutions and funders of such studies? The collective intelligence of the authors of this collective bring to the table different philosophical, historical, and political perspectives to ask questions relating to the production and circulation of knowledge around the ethics of video and children, and create a comprehensive, robust and a wide-ranging discussion. And while there is a wonderful and an eclectic mix of episteme and
subversions, the question that still needs to be asked is whether in the future the collective will explore also Eastern ethics systems as well as Indigenous ideas about ethics to even further enhance and explore the complexities of relations among ethics, video, visuality and children.

Review 2: Response-ability in video research with children – (Sean Sturm)

The problem of the ethics of using video in educational research involving children addressed in this article opens up two fields of inquiry: on the norms of research ethics, in particular, what they preclude; and on the nature of the digital archive, in particular, how it can trouble our concept of research ethics.

As to the first field: the norms of research ethics – the oft-stated tetrad of autonomy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence – are usually couched in the language of compliance, not philosophy, in part, because ethics committees focus most often on the how, not the why, of research. With educational research involving video and children, this means that the committees tend to concern themselves with how its methods address issues of power (coercion, consent and the duty of care) and privacy (anonymity and confidentiality). And, in keeping with the normative assumption of research ethics that researchers and their subjects are rational agents, this means that they tend to assume that research participants are sovereign human beings – including children as minors (non-human animals are a different category) – who communicate primarily through speech. Several contributors to the article frame their legitimate concerns about the ethics of using video in educational research involving children in these humanist and logocentric terms. But what does this speciesist ethical imaginary preclude?

As to the second field: the digital archive is usually understood in terms of how it differs from the textual archive, for example, as persistent and faithful (relative to printed matter); easily shareable and searchable (and thus risky); and both user-created (prosumerist) and automated (algorithmic). For ethics committees, this difference demands regulation to ensure the ‘data sovereignty’ of research participants (and researchers), lest they lose control of their words and so much more. Several contributors to the article frame the ethics of using video in educational research involving children in this way. But how does the digital archive trouble this textualist concept of research ethics?

I – or the ‘we’ that is the digital (mediatised and haptic) assemblage creating this text with digits, eyes and keys; notions, notes and noises; tea, wax-eyes and heavy early summer shrubs and skies – think otherwise. By way of an answer to the questions posed above, what seems lost in this article is (digital) video’s potential for co-creation, or ‘composition’ (Massumi, 2011, p. 12) that enjoins the more-than-human and the unspoken – and thus for problematising our speciesist ethical imaginary and textualist concept of research ethics. We look not to the ‘responsibilization’ (Rose, 1999) of research ethics – whereby the researcher takes on a burden of care for the risk to the research participant as a sovereign human being – but to its ‘response-ability’ (Barad, 2012, p. 208): how it can open up new ‘techniques of existence’ (Massumi, 2011, p. 14). We see research ethics as ethical insofar as it allows us to evaluate “what we do, [and] what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved,” and in relation to the kinds of potentials and capacities that those ways of existing affirm’ (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2008, p. 3, citing Deleuze, 1995, p. 100). Indeed, we would go further: research is ethical insofar as it allows ‘strengthens our response-abilities’ to other-than-human beings through other-than-textual means (after Haraway, 2016, p. 29) – which, of course, is risky, but not care-less. ( For respons-ability at work, see Lorimer, 2013; De Freitas, 2015.)

Notes

1. For the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy, see: https://brill.com/view/journals/vjep/vjep-overview.xml
2. See the Association for Visual Pedagogies website: https://visualpedagogies.com/
6. The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (VJEP) was published by Springer from August 2016 until September 2018. Subsequently, AVP became the owners of the journal which is now being published by Brill Publishers, Leiden, Netherlands. Michael A. Peters was the founding Editor-in-Chief.

In 2015, supported by eight founding Institutional Members and led by founding President, Tina Besley, the Association for Visual Pedagogies Inc (AVP), was incorporated as a new learned society to support the new Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (VJEP) and to promote and advance the emerging field of visual pedagogies.

9. https://brill.com/view/journals/vjep/1/1/article-p1_2.xml
11. https://brill.com/view/journals/vjep/2/1/article-p1_2.xml

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Michael A. Peters is a Distinguished Professor of Education, Faculty of Education at Beijing Normal University and Emeritus Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. He is the editor-in-chief of Educational Philosophy and Theory, and founding editor of five international journals. He recently coedited Wittgenstein and Education: Pedagogical Investigations (2017). Michael holds two honorary doctorates (SUNY & Aalborg) and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

E. Jayne White, Professor (Early Childhood Education) RMIT, Melbourne, Australia is President of Association for Visual Pedagogies. She co-edits the Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy, and edits a book series on these themes. Inspired by dialogic philosophy and its methodological attention to the work of the eye/I, much of Jayne’s research focuses on visual approaches to pedagogies for early childhood learning.

Tina Besley is a Distinguished Professor, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University is founding President of the Association for Visual Pedagogies (AVP) and Past President of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA). Tina is deputy editor, Educational Philosophy and Theory; Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy and associate editor for the Beijing International Review of Education. Tina’s research interests are philosophy of education, policy, subjectivity, interculturalism and global knowledge economy.

Kirsten Locke is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Critical Studies in Education at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland. As a philosopher of education, she is particularly interested in the philosophical theories that underpin mass education systems and the ways these shape issues of gender equity and democracy in education more broadly.

Bridgette Redder (PhD) is a Programme Leader at Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand and secretary for the Association for Visual Pedagogies. With a focus on early years, self-study and teacher education research projects Bridgette has been involved in all use video and visual methodologies.

Rene Novak, has a strong passion for early childhood pedagogy and technology education. He is currently supporting Tauranga centres as a Professional Services Manager for BestStart and is a published PhD candidate with his thesis focusing on developing new methodologies to study the importance of play involving Virtual Reality, as a tool and a method.

Andrew Gibbons is an Associate Professor and early childhood teacher educator at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. He is Associate Editor for Educational Philosophy and Theory and co-editor for the Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory. Andrew on early childhood policy, curriculum, teaching, health and wellbeing, the educational implications of Camus’ work, the philosophy of education, the role of technology in education, and the future of the university.
John O’Neill is a Professor and Head of the Institute of Education, Massey University, New Zealand. Previously he lectured at Leicester University, UK and has taught primary and secondary students with special educational needs. John has been a Council member of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education. In 2012 he received the Teacher Education Forum of Aotearoa New Zealand career excellence award and a Massey University Research Excellence medal.

Marek Tesar is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean International at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His research is focused on philosophical methods, childhood studies and early childhood education, with expertise in the philosophy of education and childhood. His latest research is concerned with methodological and philosophical thinking aroundontologies and the ethics of educational research.

Sean Sturm is a Deputy Director of the Centre for Learning and Research at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, coordinates the university’s Higher Education programme. Sean is treasurer for the Association for Visual Pedagogies, book reviews editor for Educational Philosophy and Theory, editor for Knowledge Cultures. He researches at the intersection of philosophy of education, critical university studies and settler studies.

ORCID

Michael A. Peters http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1482-2975
E. Jayne White http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1467-8125
Tina Besley http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4377-1257
Kirsten Locke http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2089-2793
Rene Novak http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6136-6418
Andrew Gibbons http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0847-5639
John O’Neill http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3127-9097
Marek Tesar http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7771-2880
Sean Sturm http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4011-7898

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