

Call for papers: Special issue of *Perspectives in Education:*

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Education in South Africa: what have Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) got to do with it?

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Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are playing an important role in the reconfiguration of international economies and global geography, so that networked informational nodes exist within both developed and developing countries, with informational have-nots also to be found everywhere (Castells and others). In this reconfigured world, ICTs mediate education in ways that we are only beginning to understand as new practices emerge. We are particularly concerned about how ICTs might impact on and articulate with education in South Africa with its heavy educational heavy burden of disadvantage, discrepancy and divisions. Unlike countries and regions such as Australia, the United Kingdom and The European Union, South African policy is only able to minimally incentivise and fund the use of ICTs in schools and higher education. Nevertheless there is a great deal of implementation and research activity happening on the ground, especially in communities with access (in the broader sense of the world). Those with limited or different kinds of access are affected too.

Networked technologies are relevant to and concerned with several aspects of education. New educational activities become possible through the use of computers, especially different ways of communicating and different informational activities. Networked computers offer different media forms, these including both linear and non-linear representational forms, adaptive media with inbuilt feedback, as well as productive media forms which allow for active construction by students. New media forms have an emerging grammar as the symbolic systems associated with cyberspace are formed and negotiated. Networked computers change the possible relationships and interactions which occur between those three essential pedagogical agents: teacher, student and content (or curriculum), especially through the mediation of different kinds of on-line learning environments. Networked computers mean that students bring and require new literacies in order to understand and interact with the conventions and affordances of cyberspace for learning interactions. Networked computers mean that that the constraints of time and space become weakened, thus blurring the distinctions between contact education and distance education. Networked computers are relevant to the missions and strategies of all educational institutions, whether traditional post-school institutions or those aimed at life long learners.

This complex set of emerging relationships suggests a number of research questions including:

- How are educators and students engaging with networked computers?
- How can we understand the relationships between ICTs and education?
- What conceptual tools across the range of possibilities (perspectives including education, sociology, economics, philosophy, human computer interaction studies, new literacies theories and new media theories) are local researchers using to understand what is happening in this emerging field of work?
- How does the use of ICTs in education impact on prior disadvantage?

Perspectives in Education will devote a special issue to ICTs and education in 2005 and wishes to invite submission of papers for consideration. Manuscripts will be subject to the normal PIE peer review process. We welcome empirical, reflective and research-based pieces that examine the theory and reflective practice of ICTs in South African education. We are particularly interested in the exploration of local contexts and the ways that local practitioners and researchers investigate and understand the particularities of their experiences in relation to international theoretical debates and case studies.

References

Castells M 1996. *The rise of the network society*. London: Blackwell Publishers.

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Instructions for submitting contributions to PIE appear in the end section of the journal. Individuals who request this information directly from PIE will also be able to receive the same detailed guidelines electronically or in the post.

CLOSING DATE

The closing date for RECEIVING contributions is **30 April 2005**. No contributions received after this date can be considered.