Decolonizing Research in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Politics of Methodology

May 4, 2012 at 3 PM

Education Building, Room 7

Dr. Ndimande will discuss the politics of qualitative research design and methodology along two primary dimensions: decolonizing research and the importance of Indigenous languages in research. This presentation emanates from an in-depth qualitative study that examined ideological beliefs among Indigenous parents regarding school desegregation and school "choice" policies in South Africa. First, the author argues that the language used in qualitative interviews should be situated within the larger sociocultural context of the inquiry in order to affirm and reinforce cultural identities of research participants, not just of the researcher. Second, the author contends that decolonizing approaches in research interrupt and interrogate colonial tendencies at multiple levels, thereby challenging traditional ways of conducting qualitative research. Following on Smith, and Mutua and Swadener, and Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, and others, the author argues that decolonizing approaches and culturally affirming linguistic choices in research have the potential to return marginalized epistemologies to the center.